

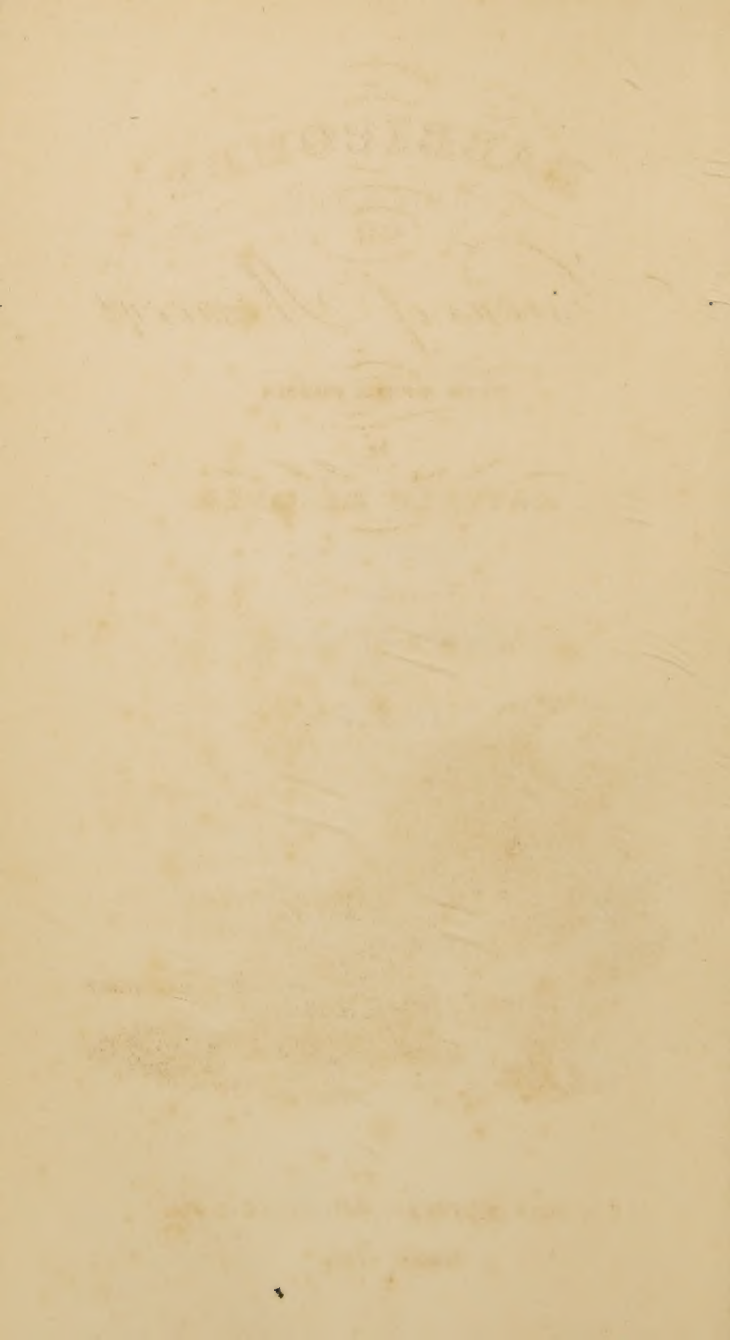
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BABBICOMBE,
OR
VISIONS OF MEMORY,
WITH
OTHER POEMS.



BABBICOMBE

OR

Visions of Memory.

WITH OTHER POEMS

by

MATTHEW BRIDGES.



LONDON SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co.

MDCCLXIII.



BABBICOMBE,

OR

VISIONS OF MEMORY,

WITH OTHER POEMS:

BY


MATTHEW BRIDGES, Esq.

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE
UNDER CONSTANTINE THE GREAT,
ETC., ETC.

LONDON:

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MDCCCXLII.



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TO
HENRY CRANMER MARCH PHILLIPPS,
ESQUIRE,
OF
WELLSWOOD,

AS A MEMORIAL OF HIS LIBERAL AND TASTEFUL EXERTIONS
IN AFFORDING TO THE PUBLIC MANY MEANS
OF ACCESS TO THE BEAUTIFUL SCENERY
IN HIS NEIGHBOURHOOD,

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTUFLLY DEDICATED

BY
THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE longest of these poems was the result of some solitary walks, in the vicinity of that beautiful spot, which has furnished a title to the present volume. *Saul the Son of Cis* is a composition slightly altered, which first saw the light in a very early publication put forth by the author, under an assumed name, nearly twenty years ago. The *Italian Pieces* were principally written on the sites to which they allude; during a continental tour in 1821 and 1822.

The reader is requested not to peruse the narrative of *Lesley*, commencing page 50, until careful reference shall have been made to an annotation at the end of the work. The latter is essential to a due comprehension of the story. It may also be mentioned, that the illustrious university thereby apparently incul-

pated, is not the Oxford of our own times, but rather of an age, which it is devoutly to be trusted has passed away; when the practical test of honour and orthodoxy was the quantity of port wine, that could be imbibed in the combination-room, without laying both body and soul ingloriously under the table! Whether Alma Mater may not have retained a few traces of academical peculiarity, not to say theological subtlety, arising perhaps from her former habits, is a question upon which various conclusions will be entertained by different parties.

Whatever may be thought of the literary merits of the subsequent sheets, there will probably exist little difference of opinion as to their typographical beauty. Seldom in the provinces, and especially at so great a distance from London, can the neatness and accuracy of execution be surpassed, which are here displayed by the respectable printer, for whose entire benefit this edition of Babbicombe appears. Left by a severe domestic bereavement, to struggle on in the world, with his desolate family, an appeal is thus made with respectful confidence to the sympathy of a generous

public, which is rarely found to fail in effectually alleviating sorrow, or supporting artistical skilfulness. Probably neither writers, nor readers, can be better employed, as to the ordinary affairs of this life, at the present crisis, than in endeavouring to lessen the pressure of commercial difficulty, amongst our middle classes; constituting as they do the nucleus of national wealth, as well as the best sources of its future preservation and prosperity.

Torquay, 20th January, 1842.

BABBICOMBE,
OR
VISIONS OF MEMORY.

BABBICOMBE.

HAMLET of peace,—to me of all most sweet,
Where the choice charms of earth and ocean meet :
Fresh fragrant downs, whose breezes breathe and play,
Cliffs clothed with green,—yet interspersed with grey ;
A zigzag road for vulgar wheels too steep,
Where only lovers ever learn to leap ;—
The rocks so tall, and yet so full of flowers,
Cool,—but not cold in summer's sultry hours ;
The slopes all lined with many a verdant grove
Down to the margin of the tranquil cove,—
That glassy sea,—outspread from morn till even,
The mirror of a blue and cloudless heaven ;—

Whilst cloven crags and marble quarries fair
Surround the calm, and shine reflected there :
These, and ten thousand varied beauties more
Attract, and chain me to the enchanted shore.

Happy are they, who through a wicket gate
Catch the first glimpse, and let their horses wait :
A hollow, scooped by nature, opens wide
The very lap of spring, in all her pride :
Orchards and gardens bursting into bloom,
The picture paradise ;—the air perfume :
Shades beneath shades, with cottages between,
At once a silvan and domestic scene :
Roofs picturesque, whence curious chimnies rise,
Censers of smoke upcurling to the skies :
Each terrace tufted, as with feathery wood,
With neat turf banks smoothed downwards to the
flood :

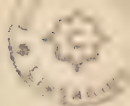
The trees with mantling creepers clasped and bound,
Thick shrouds of foliage over many a mound,—
Where groups of children spend the livelong day
In rustic sports, or happy roundelay;—
Such is the panorama, from that height,
Expanding smilingly in hues of light:
Whilst eye and heart,—around,—below,—above,
Rove in sweet rapture, and extatic love.—

See too that white, and winding, pebbly shore,
Where the waves whisper oft,—but rarely roar :
There with its graceful curve, or bolder bend,
A matchless coastline woos one like a friend ;
Now soft receding into gentle bays
Lost in the distance, or perhaps the haze,—
Now into nobler undulations grown,
Or into wildness and confusion thrown ;—
The whole all mellowed by the touch of time,

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So that the beauteous blends with the sublime.
Oft have I watched in joy, from noon to night,
The changeful tints, that flit before the sight,
From the clear surface of the mighty main,—
Along the hills—or from them back again,—
To the bright verge of that unruffled plain !
There, to the lowest depths, the eye may reach
Where madrepores and seaweed line the beach ;
Where the vast seine extends an ample fold
To tempt each finny tribe within its hold :
Whilst gallant streamers in the distance float,
From schooner,—cutter,—brigantine,—and boat ;
Each sail hung loose,—yet gliding to and fro
Over the selfsame sail in soft reverse below !

Or has the sun retired ? from walk and lawn
Lo ! young and old rush down,—the net is drawn !
Ten thousand fish, within its meshes furled,



Are landed splashing in another world :
Scales of all colours,—spoils of every size,
Glitter in heaps,—a variegated prize :—
Their fading glories, as life gasps away,
Brilliant as those which gild the death of day.

Or see those cheerful walls, above the strand,
Hostel for all who come, by sea or land :—
Thither each bark directs her shining prore
For well the sailors know that welcome door,
As now they near the rock,—and ship the oar :
'Delicious contrast,' every stranger cries
As up the combe he casts his longing eyes ;
Then threads the path, where dripping waters swell
The limpid chrystal of a fountain-well,—
Set, like some diamond, on that pensive breast
Where souls of poets find their only rest.
Or clambering on his more ambitious way,

He pants for breath, and looks across the bay ;—
Or turns o'erwhelmed,—for grotto,—seat,—and bower
Allure him upward with resistless power.

Commend me to that bench beneath three trees,
With some dear friend,—and with a mind at ease ;
Where in a mountain form, one summit seems
To rise alone, and glory in his beams ;
For the sun's radiance lingers there as yet,
And his vast brow is with the cloud-drops wet.

Commend me to yon rural—fairy—realms,
That cot and modest lawn, embraced in elms ;
With open porch, and gothic windows seen,
Robed in rich ivy, beautiful and green ;
Its garden crowned with roses white and red,
And gay, but humble flowers, in many a bed ;
Tulips and peas, with pansies great and small,
Round orange lilies tapering and tall ;—

Those bright laburnums, in their golden glow,
With sweet syringas, like a wreath of snow ;—
Secluded spot,—nest for a married pair,
Home for pure holiness,—a shrine for prayer !
From that calm threshold, meditation's eye
May look from earth, and pierce beyond the sky,
Lost in those depths, where angels can discern
Things that the sons of men will never learn !

Lead me to Anstey's cove, and Ilsam's shades,
That cove of loveliness,—those silvan glades ;
Where jutting headlands stretch into the deep,
And lull its thousand ripples fast asleep :—
Where Meadfoot seaward opens many a slope,
And islands wait around the Naze of Hope :
Where Kent's dark caverns far below extend
Midst spar and stalactite that never end !
Lead me to Watcombe,—where the waves are rolled

Round rocks of wonder,—rifted,—bare,—and bold ;
Where the sly otter steals ashore uncurbed,
And ravens croak in echoes undisturbed.
Lead me still further on,—where seamews call
From their lone watches o'er the Maiden's Fall ;
That stream of foam, descending night and day
Upon the barren beach in showers of spray.—
Then bear me back to whence this theme began
To Nature's sweetest scenes for mortal man,—
That peaceful hamlet seated on the sea,
Dear to Devonian,—Memory,—and me.

THE DREADFUL DREAM.

THE Sun went down, and the last streak of day
Serenely softened into sober grey:—
The groves, low murmuring, waved around their glades
In the cool horrors of a thousand shades:
The eagle homeward to her eyrie hied,
The turtle nestled by her partner's side:
One bird alone, to make the night less long,
Held the whole vale in silence at her song;
While over all the breezes seemed to sweep
And soothe the folded flocks in grateful sleep.

Unclouded now the lamp of evening smiled,
Like a fond mother on her slumbering child;

Above,—so calm was the refulgent glow,
So restful was the rural scene below:—
Hill, field, and forest, through the misty haze,
Shone in the distance, tipt with silvery rays;
And fleecy vapours, floating as they rose,
Involved the adjacent lake in deep repose.
Dear—dear to me had always been that hour
In youth, or riper age,—in hall or bower:
Whether it found my pensive soul alone,
Or sharing, with some kindred soul, the throne
Of noiseless thought,—or love,—or sacred prayer,
That hour of night to me was passing fair;
Till the dire time, of which I now would tell,
Shed o'er its sad return a hue of hell!

Oft to the moon, as usual, had been raised
Admiring eyes, half dreamy as they gazed;
The outer world was waning fast away

In fits of fancy—broken—grave—or gay;
When like to one, from some tall sea-cliff's verge
Hurled by a hand unseen into the surge,—
The soul within me suddenly sank down
In waves of darkness, where no life can drown!
Lost was the heaven above;—the abyss below
Groaned at my plunge another note of woe,
And closed its gloomy jaws, that ne'er could let
me go!

Down through ten thousand fathoms of the deep
Force made me dive,—the same that made me leap;
And when at last, with agonizing breath,
I rose, as then methought to combat death;
A low voice whispered from the dreary tide
That all was past,—I HAD ALREADY DIED!

There lay my spirit floundering on the waste

Of piteous billows, by no shore embraced:
Loud, and more loud, was heard the stormy swell
Of every sound confused—roar—laughter—yell,—
Signal of anguish felt;—of hope the long farewell!
Once and again I merged me in the main,
Yet found the bubbling flood encrease my pain:
Through each racked nerve the stream of torture flew
For ever rushing,—yet for ever new:
When lo! upon the pale horizon's line
Some shape uprose in melancholy sign;—
Looming as on it came,—terrific,—vast,
A phantom vessel with enormous mast!
Red forky lightnings darted from the shrouds,
Kindling a Tophet upon thick black clouds,
Which waved behind, in many a murky fold,
Like the huge banner of the grave unrolled!
But on it came; and then one could discern
Its hideous, ghastly, bulk, from stem to stern;

For oft it tacked—and tacked—and when it turned,
Beneath the doleful keel, the abysses burned!
But on it came;—and now one might descry
Large flocks of wings which beat the air on high,
Dread plumes with thunder clothed; so that from far
The welkin shook as at the voice of war.—
The crew were fleshless—demonlike—and wan,
Frowning fierce hate, and man defying man:
Wrath moved the sails, and agony the air,
While he that held the helm, with gorgon stare,
Bore on his brazen brow the name—Despair!
But on it came,—enlarging to my sight,
That awful, hovering, shadowy Ship of Night:
Lost as in smoke were soon all other forms
Amidst the uproar of unnumbered storms;
Yet only for a moment,—since I found
Gehenna's gulf for ever deepening round,
And that each pang which I in sorrow bore,
Enabled me of pain to bear the more!

So now all sense re-stretching to the full,
I felt the approach of this accursed hull,—
Leviathan in size, with ghosts and gholes
Employed on board in torturing other souls:
I heard their cries absorbing oft the gale
Till that too drowned their lamentable wail:
But on it came,—cleaving the awful sea
With every fiery eye fast fixed on me:
Horror of horrors! for above my head,
An iron net out-thrown, its meshes spread,
Enclosed me all around,—and drew me up as dead.
Yes,—dead—but not unconscious,—for the deck
Fired at my touch, like sparkles on a wreck,
When the last timber of some burning bark
A moment shines,—then sinks,—and all is dark.

Oh! then, what torments harrowed up my mind,
Anguish before—beneath—around—behind:—
Whilst as I tossed and turned me, o'er and o'er,

The livid heat calcining every pore,—
Millions of pointing fingers mocked each pang,
Peals of loud laughter through the gangways rang;
Myriads of moping mouths shed mirthful scorn
On me as mad as they, yet more forlorn!
It seemed an age, since from the upper world
In hour most evil I had thus been hurled;
And when the idea through my sensorium ran
That I was now a lost immortal man,—
Gaining foothold, I howled,—and rushed aside
To plunge once more into the noisome tide;—
When lo! foul fiends with pincers, caught me fast,
And dragged me struggling up the lofty mast;
Where as they fixed a red hot quivering spear,
To impale me on its barb,—I swooned with fear:
Not long remaining senseless; for swift pain
Racked me too soon to consciousness again:
And then o'er sable sails I could descry

The scenes about me with a spirit's eye:—
It seemed as though the vessel at each bound
Leapt into some abyss, still more profound,
Than that she sprang from;—and confusion grew
Yet more like chaos, as she downward flew!
At length beyond her,—two brief leagues ahead
Opened the final gulf toward which she sped,
The Mælstrom of all Hades!—with a pause
Of scarce one twinkling, we were in its jaws:
It was the hell of hell, yet to me heaven,
For ship—ghosts—sea—in whirling eddies driven,
Spun me to lifelessness,—and when I woke
Scenes of less torture on my senses broke,
Though still entranced they lay, nor burst as yet
their yoke.

THE GROVE AND THE GLASS.

CAST up methought on some far foreign shore,
I lay upon its beach,—sick,—bruised,—and sore:
Around me rose a strange unearthly land
Broken in form,—though with a shelving strand.
Fearful I forward moved:—but all was rude,
And lone, and sad,—the seat of solitude:
Behind me sighed the surge; before me frowned
Rocks piled on rocks, with tangled thickets crowned;
Through which a winding, thorny, narrow way
Opened its course ascending from the bay.—

And now scarce less than paradise to me
Seemed any spot secure from such a sea,

As that which tossed me hither: so I strove
To mount this inland road, and leave the cove.
'Twas steep and rough, as if no foot had trod
For many a year the melancholy sod:—
No foliage fanned the air: no sound of bird
With tuneful throat, or rustling wing, was heard:
Silence prevailed o'er all, except the caves
Of the low beach remurmuring to the waves:
And oft I thought to call, yet dared not try
Lest hell, but just escaped, should answer to my cry.

Threading the path from crag to crag I past,
Each slope more hard and slippery than the last:
Until within the bosom of a wood,—
Far from the ocean's bound, at length I stood,
And paused for breath; for such a depth of shade
No natural groves on earth could e'er have made:
Huge trunks by creepers clasped, and clothed in green,

So closely grew, that light but stole between:
Bough behind bough entwined in order deep,
With leaves that seemed alive, yet all asleep;
Leaf over leaf respiring, without noise,—
Pregnant with guilty thoughts, and guilty joys!
There the fat vampire slumbered in the gloom,
O'er flowers, that blossomed rank, without perfume:
The owl was there,—not hooting through the skies,
Wrapt were his wings, and sealed his saucer eyes:
The very rills in silence seemed to run
With ripples unsaluted by the sun;—
Or if by chance, some single beam astray
Shot through the verdant mass its slanting ray,
The flash just trembled on the dreary stream
Like an uncertain fragment of a dream!

Dreadful was all that glade,—dim—deep—and high,
An atmosphere of life in lethargy!—

As to all visible companions there,
One felt as in a solitary lair:—
Whilst as to essences unseen,—unknown,—
Man in a multitude were more alone:
Legions of wretched spirits gasped around
Thicker than grains of sand upon the ground,
In agony, methought, but uttering not a sound!

To stop was awful—awful to proceed,
But pausing made me quiver like a reed:
When! lo another object lay in sight,
A lake of waters, like a glass of light,—
Ovaled in forests,—an umbrageous frame,
From which the waving shadows went and came,
And came, and went, in many a maze away,
Like fauns and zephyrs in perpetual play.
The mirror of Diana, if as fair,—
Was only fable,—this was clear as air:

I ran to gaze,—but gazing, could not go,
And sat me down transfixed,—a Niobe of woe!

It was the Grove of Memory, through whose gloom
I had been wandering long, as in a tomb :
Nor might one doubt, that the calm, lucid, sheet
Of magic waters, spread beneath my feet,
Was the far-famed reflector, of such power,
That whoso saw it, blessed or cursed the hour.
An eye, once falling on its surface rare,
Wandered no more—for ever fastened there :
Whilst every single thought, and every word
On earth imagined, or by mortals heard ;
With every varied deed, indulged or done,
Whether in open day, or known to none,—
All there emerged to audience,—or to view,
Just as they had occurred, in sound, and hue,
And form,—without a tint beside the true !

Wonder of wonders,—when each point of time
Gave back its ghost of virtue, or of crime :
Ideas,—sensations,—on that liquid plain
Thrilled into life once more,—a motley train.
There, what on earth, men marvelled at as wise,
Wore its own aspect stript of all disguise ;
While dunces, once deluded by its spells,
Now saw the devil in his cap and bells.—
There, what for years, innumerable fools
Had praised as matchless prudence in their schools,
Unmasked its hidden motives, now displayed
Self on a throne,—with morals in the shade !
Hypocrisy was there,—but all undrest,
The window opened in his painted breast ;
Through which, observers could with ease perceive
The mainspring move,—and the real reasons heave.
Pollution too was there,—her sable stole
Turned inside out, its blackness on her soul !

Rage and Revenge there dropt their borrowed names
Of Honour—Courage,—and appeared in flames !
Envy was there,—no longer hid in haze,
Nor blasting rivals with half-whispered praise.
What passed for Modesty, was Meanness now,
All grace subtracted from its pencilled brow :
Whilst Emulation, wondered at of yore,
And oft caressed, its native burthen bore,—
A crested monster,—vulture-like,—and dyed
In its own heart's blood,—self-devouring Pride !

Thus every individual of mankind
Beheld unlocked the chambers of the mind :
Forgetfulness was gone, if once his eye
Fell on this lake, to him without a lie !
And it was found, that thousands who had burned
To run the risk, had never more returned.
Better their fate, could Lethe but have spread

Its weedy waves o'er each devoted head :
For truth, returning to her old abode
Scattered the stings of scorpions on the road ;
And pale Remorse, with conscience by her side,
Scorched them to skeletons, before they died :
Or afterwards, if sent to wander there,—
They gazed, until they vanished into air,
And sought the neighbouring glade, to slumber in
despair.

CHILDHOOD.

So seated here, I saw as from an urn
Each thought, and word, and work of life return.
I was again a child,—an only boy,—
My sisters playmate, and our parents joy :
Alas—too fondly cherished—too carest
On the soft down of the domestic nest :
Oh cruel memory,—as its glass once more
Opened before these eyes our nursery door !
My holy mother, she herself was there,
Robed in pure white, and in her easy-chair ;
Around,—we young ones stood, to hear her tell
Some tale, which never lips rehearsed so well ;
Whether from scripture, or from page profane,
It touched us deeply, as she made it plain ;

And smiles went round,—or trickling tears ran down
In tiny drops upon her snowy gown :
Whilst as the twilight shadowed o'er the room
Oft would her story deepen in its gloom ;
And towards her knees, we close and closer drew
Drinking in wonders, whether feigned or true ;
Till candles brought, and prayers all duly said,
Her own fair arms laid each of us in bed :—
These, and a thousand long forgotten hours,
Like corpses, strewn with melancholy flowers,
Now passed before me with the bitter pang
That time o'er each his knell of sorrow rang !

There—gleamed in view beside its winding road
The ivied cottage,—once our loved abode ;—
Its neat thatched roof with curious chimnies graced
The trellised porch in eglantine embraced ;
Its sloping garden,—sweet parterres,—and lawn

With roses opening to the earliest dawn ;
The scenery near of mingled rock and wood
And the hoarse cascade with its falling flood ;
The verdant uplands, where the grass grown pile
Of an old abbey raised its vaulted aisle,—
And caught the sunset like a dying smile !
Whilst further down, within its sacred bounds
Of cypresses, and rudely sculptured mounds,—
Our village church with venerable tower
Crowned its three hamlets, bosomed in a bower ;
Where orchards, blending amidst elm and oak,
Increased the beauty, yet its sameness broke :
All this now passed, like scene succeeding scene,
Shadowy though real ; and much I wept between.

My sisters then were four,—older than me,
With one exception, in her infancy :—
Not quite five summer suns had worn away

Since her lids opened to the light of day :
Her name was Mira,—and so fair her frame,
That it was wondrous, answering to her name :
Like some young cloud upon an orient sky
The soft—rich—iris of Aurora's eye.
Those vermeil hues, which the ripe nectarine streak,
Slept in repose upon her laughing cheek :
Clusters of golden curls had nature flung
Over her ivory temples, where they hung,
In tangled loveliness, or smoother care,
Tendrils unfolding to salute the air.—
There joy and sorrow would each other chase
In smiles or tears across her fairy face ;
Brief in their tarriance, or returning soon
Like flakes of vapour o'er the crescent-moon !
Was there an idol in my mother's mind ?
She loved us all—to all alike was kind ;
Yet when together sporting in the sun

If one she looked at,—Mira was that one :
Her silvery voice with all its broken words
Prattled in music, sweet as that of birds ;
Mirth round her ran, in gambols ever gay,
And the old house-dog barked at her in play.

It was a year, when Sirius seemed to glow
With warmth unwonted on the world below :
Heaven's kindly showers in vain the country craved,
Although with crops it prematurely waved :
All nature drooped beneath the sultry heat
As if her pulse of health had ceased to beat.
On one hot day, whilst underneath the trees
Mira and I were panting for the breeze ;
Placed there to play the mimicry of school
And yet as far as possible be cool :—
A gorgeous butterfly in that still hour
Floated before us, like a flying flower :

Nor thought, nor pause ensued—and chase was given
To catch the prize, as though it were from heaven :
Alas—from shrub to shrub—from rose to rose
The Splendor flitted on without repose ;
And we, attracted, the swift game explored,
Till far beyond our reach, away it soared :—
Emblem of what the world can never see,
And what the soul enlarged, awaits to be !

The sun rode high in his meridian noon
Just as poor Mira sickened in a swoon :
Cries speedily brought help ;—but health had fled,
And murmuringly she moaned,—‘My head—my head :’
Like him of Shunem,—but more full of charms
She breathed her last in the maternal arms.

Methought all this I witnessed o’er again,
My father’s rage,—his partner’s silent pain :

She raved not,—spoke not,—sighed not for her child,
But from that time, twas said, she never smiled.
She was a noble woman,—in her form
Bearing that mien, which quails not in the storm :
Her courage wore the meekness of the dove,
And towards our sire twas wisdom watching love :
Yet when her children were within her sight
Twas something self-excelling—calm—and bright ;
So that we thought her above earthly things,
A guardian angel, only wanting wings !

Ah ! then I saw the narrow coffin made
And shrouded Mira in that casket laid :
I saw the servants shed a shower of tears
Results of feeling, and perhaps of fears :
I saw that parent, who had Mira borne
Give the last kiss, and look of love forlorn ;
Her grief, like granite, durable and dry,

Had no relief, or fountains of supply !
I saw how all of us with faces pale
Placed on the bier a lily of the vale ;
And wondered what it was, to be asleep
So as no more to wake,—or smile,—or weep !

And to the grave of bitterness and woe
I saw once more the sad procession go :
Heard the last service, solemn and profound,
And ‘dust to dust’ upon the coffin sound ;
When all seemed o’er ;—and all then went their ways
To do dull duties, as on other days :—
Yet when lone midnight came, and earth was still
The vale,—the village,—and the wooded hill ;
My mother knelt with me upon that tomb,
In silent thought, though without aught of gloom :
But anguish, such as hers, no sons of men
Methinks could paint, with pencil, or with pen :

I felt it all once more,—for minds may feel
That which in strangeness they cannot reveal,—
The abyss of sorrow,—the convulsive sob,
The pangs that paralyze,—the thrills that throb :
Yet well—full well—she recognized the hand
Of her kind father, in the stern command,—
Which, lest her heart from heaven itself should roam,
Pierced it in love, and fetched its favorite home.
The moonbeams fell upon her features fair,
Her eye all calmness,—penitent in prayer :
And o'er that eye, her eyebrow arching stood,
Just as in nature, when a dark brown wood
In shade submissive bows, and overhangs the flood !

YOUTH.

AND now the days of childhood past and gone,
My youthful years came over,—one by one ;
Each with its chequered scenes in curious train
Of doubtful pleasure,—or of bitter pain :—
An orchard plundered for the twentieth time,
Its sore atonement curing not the crime :—
The bird's nest rifled in some hedge or grove,
Nuts gathered just where urchins might not rove,
Trout tickled first—then taken from the stream,
The mill-pond angled for the perch or bream ;
Nocturnal forays into field or brake,
Diurnal raids to scotch the scaly snake ;—

With games more lawful, though with more alloy
Since stolen waters yield the sweetest joy ;—
All re-appeared, with every charm and change,
One and the same in renovation strange.

Peace to his ashes,—there in wonted mood
Stalwart and stern our old preceptor stood ;
Too like a tyrant,—though with some things kind,
The sparkling glow-worms of a murky mind :
In stature half an Anak, strong as tall,
His voice sonorous,—but his knowledge small :
And yet the little that he could impart
Would tell surprisingly, through wondrous art ;
Like grains of gold expanding into leaves
In substance losing what their face receives :
We called him Moses,—for upon his head
Ere decent powder had been daily spread,—
Two locks of hair, (and all was bald beside,)

Perked up, like horns, in patriarchal pride :
Where much they added to his air and mien,
When in the fact of flagellation seen ;—
Or if predicting that the wretch just flayed
Would prove ungrateful for his pains displayed,
Then lest sad fate should realize such fears,
He wept, like Pluto, a few iron tears !

Peace to his ashes—useful in his day,
And boasting often of his birchen sway,
That never yet was flogging thrown away !

There was a youth I loved, beneath his rule,
Of my own age,—the favourite of the school :
They called him Sinclair, generous, bland, and bold,
His courage suited to one twice as old :—
We slept together,—had a common purse,
And shared all schemes, for better, or for worse.

Not further off, than about half a mile,
A lane conducted to the churchyard stile :
Where amidst groves low whispering to the gale,
And grass-grown graves o'er which they seemed to wail,
The parish sanctuary reared its form,—
A home to many a soul from many a storm.
Twas raised on arches, with an entrance left
To its large crypt almost of light bereft ;
Save that at intervals, through slits of stone
A ray might slide between, and shine alone,—
And that one window, at the upper end
Remained undarkened, like an ancient friend.
There beneath painted glass, an altar stood
Relic of popish times,—and carved in wood :
Shapes, hideous and grotesque, deformed and grim,
Mingled with saints, and winged seraphim ;
While monks around in silent marble prayed
Their cowls with lichens green and spiders webs o'erlaid.

In evil hour upon one summer's even
Sinclair in haste a foolish gage had given,
That with a comrade,—would a comrade go,
If not,—alone he'd wander to and fro,
Within that crypt by midnight,—and ev'n dare
To sleep till cockcrow on the altar there !
Rash was the vaunt,—but from a thing once said
No jeers could turn him, for he knew no dread :
And yet, while pushed by honor to proceed,
He begged me to be partner in the deed ;—
Thrice three times I refused, scarce knowing why,
When something like a tear, within his eye,
Told me, though not afraid, that he repented,
And I to soothe his mind, at length relented
From my own purpose,—and to go consented.

To roost we went as usual, packed in pairs,
Till all was snug below,—and all up stairs :

The lank lean usher, having gone his rounds,
Announced his slumbers deep, by deeper sounds :
When up we rose,—at least a dozen boys,
Without our shoes, to shun the slightest noise.
Breathless we paused but once,—whilst was unbarred
A small low casement opening to the yard ;
Whence we with ropes descended,—boy by boy,
Like the sly warriors from the horse of Troy :
The ground soon reached,—about a fathom down,
We shot along the lane, nor touched the town ;
And ten short minutes saw us at the stile
Beneath the shadow of the sacred pile.
A truss of straw, from some near barn or shed,
Sinclair and I each carried for our bed.

It was a solemn scene ; the heavens above
Glowed in their glory like a dome of love,—
Hung round with stars, through which the Milky Way

Shone like God's Host amidst his works astray,—
Wandering in mazy millions, as if white,
A long irriguous labyrinth of light,—
O'er the blue vault now here, now there revealed,
At times unclouded, and at times concealed :
Upwards we looked and trembled,—not with chill,
But with the sudden sense of pending ill :—
In vain we saw that hoary radiance roll
Serene, though pale, outspread from pole to pole ;
In vain we gazed at those unnumbered spheres,
Some to divert their thoughts, and some their fears :
Sinclair himself, the boldest of the bold,
Tried to be cheerful,—but his hand was cold :
I felt it, as we bade the rest adieu,
When he and I into the crypt withdrew.

'Twas pitchy dark at first,—yet on we crept
Towards the old altar, where three bats had slept,—

Till we disturbed them,—and their leathern wings,
Flapped the damp wall,—most melancholy things :
We drove them from their hold, then spread our straw
With strange sensations, gathering into awe ;
And down we lay, just where the starlit panes
Covered the floor with variegated stains.

My comrade closed his eyes,—and fell asleep,
But not in wonted slumber,—’twas too deep :
Each feature formed, as though deprived of breath,
Into the fixedness of early death :—
To call him,—shake him,—oft I vainly strove,
Fear made me mute,—nor would it let me move :
So that I seemed almost as still as he,
Yet not in rest,—but throbbing agony.

The clock struck one, with such a lengthened tone,
As though the life of time itself were gone :

Solemn and sad its dying accents stole
Through all the full recesses of my soul :
When lo ! a flickering and portentous glare
Burst through the gloom, and gilded all the air.
Bright was the vision, as it nearer came,
For a fair female issued from the flame ;
With shining feet she stept upon the ground,
Yet neither arch nor stone gave back the sound :
Her left hand held a dove prepared to fly,
As toward her brow it turned its tender eye :
But on the other arm, with care she bore
A shroud, that swept in folds along the floor ;
Just as the deathful avalanche of snow
Falls from an Alp upon the vale below.—
She closer drew to Sinclair than to me,
Yet so that I could every feature see :
Nor can a mortal mind conceive or trace
So sad,—or half so beautiful a face :—

From her rich ringlets each soft gleaming ray
Rested on him, like moonbeams upon clay :
While far and near, a pale reflection fell
On all the objects round,—made visible.

There was a monstrous monument of stone
Over against her,—by that altar lone :
A grim supporter stood on either side,
Bearing some scutcheon of departed pride ;
One was the grisly King, with dart displayed,
The other was a Sexton with his spade :
On both, the lady her refulgence cast,
But with her finger beckoned to the last !
Marvel of marvels,—whilst I strove to scream,
And strove in vain, amidst the trance or dream,
I saw the second figure leer and frown,
And shake his stony head, and hobble down,—
Stooping and tottering,—haggard,—old,—and wan,

The living statue of a grave-yard man !
Then, which surprised my bosom more and more,
Forthwith he went to work upon the floor ;—
Not like decrepitude at labour long,
For 'twas as though the labour made him strong :
And as his hands and tool upturned the earth,
Frowns became grins of mischief and of mirth :
He smote the soil with a redoubled blow,
Delving the deeper, as he sunk below ;—
Till only now and then his head, upreared,
Nodding at me, above the ground appeared ;
As up he threw some potsherd through the gloom,
Or measured to and fro the growing tomb !
Oh ! dreadful hour,—it seemed the lapse of years,
Yet there the vision shone, methought in tears :
For stooping over Sinclair, where he lay,
She spread the shroud upon his pallid clay,
Then let the captive go ; and the dove flew away :

Or so I thought : when to relieve my pain
Just at that point, the morning broke again.

And with the darkness, like a passing cloud
'Twas gone,—the scene,—the sexton,—and the shroud.
Sinclair awoke,—and springing to the ground
Declared he never yet had slept so sound.
Back to the school, with eager haste we fled,
And rat-like clambered to our proper bed.
The ropes removed,—the bolt within its place,
No vestige left for man or maid to trace.
The few, who had been out, loved far too well,
Their precious flesh and blood the tale to tell :
They thought us heroes, who had couched on straw,
Oft asking how we felt, and what we saw :
I kept my counsel under lock and key :—
Sinclair knew nothing but referred to me.

And yet the lad, whenever evening came,
From that time forth, was never quite the same :
To shun all secret places he was known ;
He started at his shadow, if alone,—
And in his sleep, would weep, and wail, and moan.
His strength departed,—though with many a pause,
And pale he waxed, and wan, without a cause :
Whilst as the flame of life burnt slowly through,
Gentler and sweeter all his graces grew :—
Friends, parents, brothers, loved him more and more,
And wondered how love's dream should e'er be o'er :
Just as the Morning Star is watched away,
And, on the horizon's verge, drops brightening into day.

But when he came to die, (he died at home),
Reason beyond her bounds would often roam :
Strange fantasies his lips would vent in vain,
And of the coldness of a crypt complain :

‘ Remove that shroud,’ he’d cry,—‘ Its weight I feel,
‘ See how it covers me from head to heel :’
And then recoiling as with sudden fear,
His voice would falter—‘ Ah—I hear—I hear :’
When, if they asked what sound he could have heard,
Since no one present either spoke or stirred ;—
‘ I hear a man of stone within four walls,
‘ Digging a grave ;—Ah—there the earth now falls :
‘ See how he works away—yes—let me fly,
‘ Like yon white dove, just fluttering for the sky :
‘ All hail thou Shining One,—and let me be,—
‘ Since die I must,—be laid in death by thee :
‘ Avaunt grim Sexton !’—thus the youth replied,
In faint low murmurs,—till upon his side,
He turned,—and with a shivering struggle,—groaned
and died !

MANHOOD.

LIKE drops of dew, Aurora's early tears,
The transient life of mortal men appears ;
Soon is their race of short existence run,
They shine and vanish in the rising sun ;
Whilst following mornings brighter drops display,
To glitter there,—but pass as soon away ;—
With generations fading from the view,
Corruptions,—follies,—all are fading too ;
And future spirits, though as yet unborn,
Shall hail the glories of a cloudless morn.

Truth—truth alone can never fade or die,
Her very life is Immortality !—

With God she dwelt before his works of old,
Ere time upsprang, or growing years unrolled ;
When not as yet the empty earth revealed
Her various face of vale, or flowery field ;
When not as yet the illimitable sea
Hushed every wave, and heard his firm decree,
In awe receding o'er its hoary beds
From the dry land, as mountains heaved their heads :
Before the sun,—the moon,—or azure skies,
Or night and day were seen to fall and rise,—
Then,—then was truth eternal and alone
Resplendent beaming from Jehovah's throne ;
Nor lapse, nor change, can e'er her essence turn,—
No,—not when nature on its pyre shall burn,
And every star go out extinguished in that urn !

Such were the thoughts, which flashed across my mind,
Years having passed away, as I reclined

In meadows, where the waves of Isis wind.
City of Circe ! on the tide of time
Source of old fable, and of modern crime ;
What noble youths, by thousands, in thy schools
Have blackened into bigots—rakes—or fools ;
Their solemn introduction to the sty,—
An oath,⁽¹⁾ not to be kept,—yet not a lie !
The right and wrong thus blended in one hue
Our morals weakened, as our whiskers grew :
Heedless of rules in college, or in hall,
The robe of orthodoxy, covered all ;—
All vices, and all virtues, in that den
Turned into various shapes of Oxford men ;
Wolves,—spaniels,—goats,—from Alma Mater came,
With lions, here and there, to roar for fame.
Disproved opinions, blinking in the light
Of new-born knowledge hither took their flight,
Square caps, and dozing Dons, a welcome sight !

Man is gregarious, and will often chuse
For his companions, such as meet his views,
In points of taste or temper,—though not found
Walking precisely on the self-same ground.
It happened thus with Lesley and with me,
Though then I knew not what I lived to see.
His face was handsome,—more so than his frame,
For that was blighted, and had one leg lame :
His jaw too looked a little underhung,—
And when it opened, shewed a milky tongue ;
Yet teeth well set, and kept with nicest care
Half hid that organ, and impearled the snare,
For eloquence was his beyond compare !—
His eyes were dark and beaming,—though their fire
Flashed something like the Cobra's when in ire :
But from his brow, it was, that Genius waved
A sceptre of dominion undepraved,—
Where strength and beauty blended into one,

Like Solomon, beneath a Syrian sun,—
Upon his ivory throne, when all his works were done !

We were together much—and soon began
Each to prove well the other's inner man ;
At least we thought so ; and as months rolled by
Time warmed our friendship, and confirmed the tie.
In age we were the same ; and when we both
Oft canvassed the matriculation-oath,—
We thought it little less than one degree
Short of the foulest guilt of perjury :
While Lesley would avow, that since he swore,
He could not hate deception as before :—
The Church, he said, had sanctioned for her youth
As virtue, that, which was not strictly truth :
Her adjuration was to certain laws
Which she dispensed with, as the Dons saw cause :
I differed from him there : although persuaded,

That where the conscience has been once invaded,
Her pillars on a rock no longer stand
But on foundations, frailer than the sand.
Our final Long Vacation now had come,
And Lesley visited my cherished home :—
Much was he struck with all he witnessed there,
The reign of order,—the calm hour of prayer :
The solemn benediction slowly spoken
O'er our bowed heads, in accents not unbroken,
Of love maternal, the benignant token !
The morning hymn upon the organ played,
A grace in metre brief of music made ;—
The joyous aspect then of young and old,
The jest half-whispered, or the dream half-told :
The cheerful clatter of our settling down
Some creaky chair upon a luckless gown :
The new laid eggs adjusted to a turn,
Around the bubbling—agitated urn :

Cups passing oft, like steamers sent to sea,
Smoking with fumes of coffee or of tea :
The proffered slice of bacon, or of brawn,
To eager plates in playfulness withdrawn :
Nods,—winks,—and fun, with or without disguise,
From white mob-caps encircling merry eyes :—
But now alas ! the assembly great and small
Cold in the arms of death, and covered with his pall !

And there was One, the queen of that fair quire
Rose of its wreath, and soul of its desire :—
My eldest sister,—Gertrude was her name,
A pearl of virtue in a golden frame :—
Hers was the form no pencil can express
In symmetry, and size,—all loveliness :
Hers were the features shunning to be known,
The bud of beauty not as yet full blown ;
Where health,—and hue,—and harmony combine

To grace the modest flower,—yet veil its shrine :
Hers was the temper, which could gild a shroud,
Or paint a rainbow on the darkest cloud :
Hers was the mind, reflective—passive—clear,
Where thoughts, without their shadows, can appear ;
So pure the spring of truth in which they lie,
Its molten chrystal borrowed from the sky :—
She was the charmer of our humble hearth,
Fount of its peace, and maker of its mirth :
The poor she helped in silence, like a rill,
That feeds unheard the verdure of the hill :
Infants she taught : the sick from her might know
The road to heaven above, from earth below,—
In which the mourner and the meek may go :
The hoary head before her felt less gray,
As though the snow of years her smile could melt away.

Departed days—ah ! why revive again
The retrospect producing only pain ?

There I beheld them, in the magic glass,
O'er the mind's eye in pale succession pass,
As the wind walks upon the waving grass !

The hour preceding noon had now come round,
Where every hour its full employment found :
The psalms and lessons, in due order read,
To solemn thoughts and commentaries led ;
When Lesley's oily and pernicious tongue
On themes divine the proper changes rung ;
And where alone, an angel should have trod,
He mixed, like Satan, with the Sons of God :
Then in the walk succeeding, or the drive,
The same keen artist kept the coals alive ;
Fanned them with seeming breath of heavenly fire,
His own heart hot with a less pure desire.

Not far from where our lowly mansion stood,
There was a root-house nestled in a wood,—

Formed of old trees, with curious skill combined,
About whose bark a thousand creepers twined :
The walls within were covered o'er with stones
And shells,—and spars,—arranged in various zones ;
While low beneath them rose a mossy seat,
With pebbles for a pavement to the feet.—
The roof was thatched,—the windows were in taste,
At once grotesque and gay with honeysuckles graced :
And yet so lone the spot, that many a hare,
With many a dormouse, couched and slumbered there ;
Or started, at some footstep, down the slope,
Like waking dreams of pleasure or of hope :—
It was a place for lovers ; and their loves
Found echoes in a nest of turtle-doves ;
Where high in air, when none beside them sung,
Those gentle birds cooed sweetly o'er their young.

'Twas here my sister, in an evening stroll,

Found Lesley waiting to pour out his soul :
Already had his tongue around her wove
A webwork now completed in the grove :
They gave their mutual faith, though both content
To pin the matter on her sire's consent ;
And that perhaps too easily was given,—
Yet marriages, 'tis said, are made in heaven.

The looked-for nuptial morn at length appeared,
By all rejoiced in, save the few who feared.
There are some minds so sensitive, that they
Foresee in cloudless suns the darkest day :
And oft, methought, my mother liked not well
Lesley's professions, sounding as a bell :
Her own religion lay not in a noise,
But in the calm reserve of silent joys ;
Like the rich diamond of the deepest mine
Content to glow, though none might see it shine :

Yet since her doubts were not aloud exprest
Small was the notice taken by the rest.

The nuptial morning came :—our village tower
Toppled with peal on peal to cheer the hour :
Beneath a verdant vista, arched with boughs,
The happy couple passed to plight their vows :
On either hand, a school of children gay
Strewed roses red and white along the way :
And home returning, through the kindly crowd,
Youth and old age pronounced her name aloud ;
Mounting the monuments on either side
To get a glimpse of,—and to bless the bride :
Favours and banners waved, and flapped on high,
As hats and caps ascended in the sky :—
Three fiddles scraped a glee ; the pipers' cheeks
Blew dropsically rich with rosy streaks ;
Five wretched flutes, and hautboys out of tune,

Breathed charming discords with a cracked bassoon :
While one stupendous viol, on its case,
Groaned and bemoaned a melancholy bass.

Then to the banquet fell at least six score
Eating, as though they never ate before,
Nor e'er again would eat for evermore.
In parlour,—kitchen,—hall, and on the green
Viands appeared, and vanished from the scene :
Fruits—love-knots—garlands—quickly ceased to glow
Around the mountain-cake, as white as snow :
Knives, forks, and spoons, tremendous havoc made
Where capons cold in ruins soon were laid ;
Galenas,—plovers,—every dainty thing,
Preserves,—hams,—patties, rapidly took wing :
Fat farmers, ravished at so rare a sight,
Would long have grinned ineffable delight,
Had not their grinders been engaged outright :

When lo ! with sweep eccentric, to the gate,
Up drove the chaise and four in mimic state :
Down went the steps,—postillions staring round
As the bride's feather fell upon the ground !—
With parting brief, off went the wedded pair,
Each last farewell, half sobbing, and half prayer :
The village band struck up their roundelay,
Men turned to dance with maids,—and boys to play,
Ale gushing forth in streams to chase dull care away !

FOREIGN TRAVEL.

WITHIN the cycle of a single year
Lesley had launched upon his new career :
A grand degree had gained him great renown,
With all the envied honours of the gown :
Prizes for essays easily he won,—
And Alma Mater gloried in her son.
Forward he sprang from height to height sublime,
Just as ambition scales the cliffs of time ;
Applause and flattery fluttered round his ways,
The very Muses crowned him with their bays ;
Until he sank beneath the weight of praise.
Alas for man,—his sunshine is the hour
When Self is at its point of greatest power,—
And rising like a bubble from the bowl,

Reflects the world around upon his soul :—
No hues so splendid for the moment seem,
Yet soon it bursts and all is but a dream !

'Twas so with him,—for lifted up on high,
Thus above earth,—he fancied it the sky :
His conscience too was warped, when he subscribed,
By all that Oxford has to offer,—bribed :
For she, like Rome, relying upon age,
That nothing should be altered on her page,—
Chartered abuses, which at length have grown
With false embraces round her tottering throne ;
Smothering the hoary parent whom at first
It might have seemed as though exclusion nurst ;
Until the ruin, wavering with the weather,—
Threatens to tumble down in fragments altogether !

It proves but one propensity to wrong

To palter with the pen, or with the tongue ;
And 'tis the violation of a law,
Not to forswear—that constitutes the flaw :
A deeper shade may aggravate the shame,
But lies are lies, although disguised their name :
The harlotry which draws away the heart
From a straight path betrays some tainted part :
And scour deceptive statutes, as you will,
Unsound they tingle, and will do so still.
Thus Lesley, wounded first by treacherous laws,
Lapsed at the last through overmuch applause :
Caressed by all for genius, wit, and sense,
Habits were formed of bottomless expense :
His college, dazzled at so rare a star,
Allured him onward to attempt the bar :
There circuits,—treats,—and causes without fees
Pleaded for friendship,—or himself to please,—
Consumed his time,—his spirits,—and his health,

His fortune too,—and something more than wealth.
Then came excitement, leading him astray,
Till dice devoured the night, and sleep the day :
Whilst pleasure fixed him, where her daughters dwell,
And stript him naked on the brink of hell !

Tw'as now when ruin stared him in the face,
A merchant had compassion on his case :
Proud, rich aristocrats of brighter scenes,
Were gone like flies, when winter intervenes ;
The man of commerce offered him a chance,
To sail for Egypt, and return by France ;
Upon commission, purchases to make,
With handsome profits on a moderate stake.
The terms were liberal,—there was little choice,
So that to send him seemed the general voice :
My broken-hearted sister only wept—
Since to her soul, the worm of woe had crept :

'Twas deemed more prudent she should stay behind,
Though some thought not,—and proved of wiser mind :
In further hope that Lesley might amend,
It was arranged, that I should go as friend :
And so we sailed for Alexandria's shore,
With sighs for joys, that could return no more.

Fair was the passage from our native isle
To Pompey's Pillar,—and the mouths of Nile :
Oft we conversed of yesterdays grown old,
Whose smiles were gone,—or if not gone, were cold :
Oft out of future years gay fancy made
Scenes without cloud, or pictures without shade :
In vain we saw the lingering sunbeams rest
On Cintra's silvan slopes, and glorious crest,
Then darkening down the radiance that they gave
Like golden gladness hastening to its grave :
Vain was that voice of nature,—or the sound

Of Calpe's straits,—hoarse—awful—and profound :
The varied sky,—the fitful winds were vain
With Malta's sultry rock, and moonlit main,—
To teach the truth, that amidst hopes and fears,
Man's way is oftenest watered by his tears !

And yet affliction bears a gentle wand
To melt the heart that bows beneath her hand ;
But if repelled, or scorned by wretched pride,
She stamps it harder than the highway side.
Lesley had braved her thus : each dreadful stroke
Aroused defiance,—or contempt awoke :
Till scarce a trace remained of that first love
Lit from below,—not kindled from above :
No sooner had we reached our port in peace,
Than every check of virtue seemed to cease :
Clime—customs—manners, fed the fatal flame,
And passion wallowed in the arms of shame !

One day, with thoughts and feelings all ajar,
I turned, with him, into the slave-bazaar :—
Where to my horror, drawing forth a sum,
He bought a beauteous girl, and struck me dumb.
Her hue was Abyssinian ; but her hair
Flowed down from head to heel, as soft as air :
Her eyes were large, yet piercing,—and their gaze
Bound the beholder fast, in strange amaze ;
So deep the depths unfolding to his sight
Of mind there mirrored in those orbs of night !
She seemed a female Satan,—full of sin,
Robed in resistless power, but dark within ;
As though an embryo hades lay in coil
Ready to gape for prey, and swallow up the spoil.

Wretch that he was ;—in vain, remonstrance poured
Bitter reproaches, sharper than a sword,
To mind and conscience, able still to feel,—

But his were reckless as a wall of steel !
Was he reminded of his nuptial vows ?—
‘Oxford,’ he said, ‘a breach of oath allows :’
Was he reminded of a future state ?—
He grinned for answer, betwixt fear and hate,
‘That future woes at all events would wait !’
Was he reminded of his loss of fame ?—
He murmured,—‘that he cared not for a name ;
‘ He long had played with life, and lost the game !’
So profligate his fallen mind had grown
That grace itself declined, and left him all alone.

No tidings, yet, had been transmitted home,
For words to tell the tale would never come ;
And on the sheet, whate’er I strove to trace,
Wore the sad shadow of my sister’s face,—
Silent in sorrow, like the stricken deer
Wounded to death, and fugitive with fear,

Till in some thicket, far from every eye,
It there unseen may stretch itself,—and die!

So weeks, and months, successively took wing,
And winter slept upon the lap of spring.—
Lesley removed to Cairo;—but ev'n there,
I dogged his haunts, half-bordering on despair:
We met, and briefly spoke:—for by that time
Black wrath was stealing on the steps of crime;
So that he could not,—though he often tried,
Dismiss me altogether from his side.—

It chanced one night, when strolling in disguise,
To ward off insult, and prevent surprise;
That just before me, scarce one hundred feet,
A lantern flickered, dangling through the street,—
Borne by some dervise, as at first it seemed,
Until upon his gait the red light gleamed!

Ah ! then how well that halting limp I knew,
And nearer still,—yet not too near, I drew.
Forward he moved with stealthy—noiseless pace,
Through many a winding lane, and loathsome place ;
Through silent alleys, and along the banks
Of sluggish dull canals,—and duller tanks ;
O'er heaps of rubbish rotting, and outspread,
Where the foul vulture in its glory fed ;—
Through ruined arches,—where the jackal's calls
Startled the drowsy watchman on the walls ;
Far from the mosque's proud dome, with night-dews wet,
And the tall form of graceful minaret ;—
Until at length, beyond a threshing-floor,
He opened,—and pushed through some secret door ;
Yet not so secret,—but that on the scent,
I also found it out, and through it went.
The pathway now descended, and then rose
To where I saw two folding valves unclose ;

Whilst hands, invisible, rude curtains slid
Back from the angle of a pyramid,—
In whose recess,—its ragged veils withdrawn,—
Over old stairs an arch appeared to yawn.
Lesley had mounted up their dangerous flight
Ere I could dare to follow by his light ;
But when we both had clomb into the gloom
The staircase ended in an upper room.
Numbers were there in every mask of dress,
So that unmarked we mingled in the press :
While round the whisper ran, from one and all,
That we had reached Abdallah's magic hall !

THE MAGICIAN.

THE apartment, where we were, was large and high,
Ribbed with rough stone, and fit for glamoury :
Oppressive silence brooded on the crowd,—
As though they quaked, and feared to breathe aloud.
The walls were stained with cobwebs, and with damp,
As could be just discerned by glimmering lamps ;
Within whose gloom tarantulas upsprung,
And many an asp displayed its forked tongue ;
Whilst here and there, a centipede was stopt,
Or to the floor, disturbed, a scorpion dropt !
It was an awful hour,—an awful place,
For much that memory never would retrace ;
But where remorse her egg of guilt might lay,
To be the demon of a dying day !—

Far at one end, that could be scarcely seen,
Two lofty props upheld a curious screen :
Before it, on a tripod, glowed an urn,—
Where kindling frankincense was made to burn ;
And whence, as from its centre, the bare ground
Shone with a circle drawn exactly round,—
Resplendent with the twelve celestial signs
Disposed in order on respective lines.—
A monkey watched the brazier full of holes,
Leered at the mob, or sometimes stirred the coals ;
And shewed his grinders, as he shut the pan,
With monstrous skill, half satyr and half man !
A thrill of horror spread,—each pulse beat slow,
All wished themselves away, yet none would go ;
When lo ! Abdallah stood within the light,
But how he came, escaped my aching sight.

Erect he rose,—although his hoary head
Told well how many a year had o'er it sped.

Sunk were his eyes beneath an ample brow
Where sorrow, to and fro, had passed her plough,—
Working deep furrows;—yet where none but deeds
Of self, and sense, and sin, had sown their seeds.
His upper lip was curled,—and full of scorn,
His lower drooped,—as though with hope forlorn;
While down, from both, there fell a mournful beard,
Life's last grey foliage,—like an autumn seared.
It swept in folds his broad majestic breast,
Or parting, showed the clasp across his vest;
A vest all covered o'er with figures old
Of hieroglyphic forms, and worked in gold.
One hand he rested on a starry globe,
The other touched,—and oft arranged his robe:
He looked the something more than priest or sage
Of a forgotten,—or a blasted age:—
His grave—sad—aspect—deep attention woke—
One might have heard, when he his silence broke,
The very spiders spinning as he spoke:—

‘ Wretches—why come ye here?’—the sorcerer said,
‘ To drink the cup of death, or raise the dead ?
‘ And yet ye need not disappointed go,—
‘ If ye can bear what ye would wish to know !
‘ Whoever dares,—let him now stand by me
‘ And whisper that which he desires to see !’

The dastard crowd sat motionless and mute,
Till I approached,—and whispering, urged my suit :
With pelf I lined his palm,—but in his ear,
So lowly spoke, that no one else could hear !

Aloft he tossed his arms,—then shook the fire,
As up it blazed with almost maniac ire,
Curling and rolling like a funeral pyre :—
Fuel he heaped on fuel, whose perfume
Shed overpowering influence through the room ;
Forth from their hiding place his monkey drew
Two dusty mummies into open view,—

Tore them in pieces from the rifted frames
And cast their fragments, reckless, on the flames :
Crackling they vanished, fast as they were piled,
One was a cat,—the other was a child ;—
Nor did the satyr cease to ply his hands
So long as aught remained of burning brands ;
Yet these were soon exhausted ; and hot gleams
Flashing at intervals, in fitful streams,
Played o'er the walls,—the screen—the throng—the roof,
Startled the rats, and kept the newt aloof ;—
One dreadful groan was heard,—and only one,
The last long death-pang of some soul undone :
For now Abdallah, as the fire waxed pale,
Seized an ampulla from a rusty nail,—
And o'er the embers its contents outpoured,
Quenching each sparkle with a naked sword ;
When darkness fell on the whole scene around,
Ere he could dash that vessel on the ground !

What words can tell the terror and despair
Of every spell-bound, masked, spectator there,
As each cold brow perspired,—and felt its rising hair ?
But suddenly,—as though an earthquake woke,
The pavement trembled, and through clouds of smoke
Appeared in magic glare that screen, now near,
Like a large window,—glazed,—and clean,—and clear ;
So that our eyes, through its partition thin,
Could see distinctly all that passed within !

And oh ! that sight,—as it returns again,
With every feature full of woe and pain !

It was a chamber, in our house at home,—
Where pleasure once, but sorrow now had come.
There was the well known carpet on the floor,
The easy chair,—the dark empaneled door,—
An indian cabinet, with ivory files,—

The chimney garnished with its china tiles,—
Where the two testaments, both old and new,
Stared in stark pictures variously blue :—
Whilst on the couch,—its curtains half-undrawn
Displayed a lovely lady, white as lawn !

Her head,—her dying head—the pillow prest,
Paler than parian marble laid at rest :
Yet one black ring encircled either eye,
Sealed in the sleep, that soothes us to the sky ;
When nature yields to the last mortal strife,
And lets the soul be swallowed up of life.

It was my sister Gertrude,—not alone
Left at this hour to breathe her final moan :
Our watchful mother meekly sat beside
That bed of death,—as though she would have died :
And near her was the nurse, with face of gloom,

Dressing a still-born infant for its tomb :—
When lo ! those lids, that lay fast closed and bound,
A moment opened on the scene around,—
Glanced at the babe with tears, and yet with joy,
A strange—mixed look,—half pleasure—half alloy,
Mingled with something it could scarce express,
Forgiveness,—gratitude,—and tenderness ;—
Then wandering on our parent,— and from thence,
Fluttering towards realms of faith, from those of sense ;
Like the sweet bird, to whom its God hath given
To meet the morning, at the gate of heaven :—
And just as sounds of anguish, and of grief
Were heaving from my heart to its relief,—
A hideous shriek, between a roar and yell,
Such as might suit the loosened fiends of hell,
Broke forth from Lesley,—that unhappy man,
Who down the stairs now headlong leapt and ran !
Confusion seized the rest,—some called for light,—

Some rushed upon the dervise in his flight ;—
Some jostled others,—and were pushed again,
Till blows met blows, like storms of hail and rain :
Cloaks—cowls—and staves,—with curses loud and deep,
Torn—crushed—and broken,—made Abdallah weep :
In vain he threatened, with stentorian call,
To sink into the pit that odious hall :—
Not the less furiously they fought, or fled,
These thirsting for revenge, and those for bed,
And but a few undoubting what he said.
Myself with difficulty stole away,—
Shocked at the very soul, and longing for the day.

BANDITTI.

No hour was spared, as soon as it was light,
In weighing well the wonders of the night :
It struck me, if I could but see my friend,
We might together act and watch the end :—
Full with this thought, I further felt inclined
To soothe by every means his wounded mind :
So twice five times, before the sun went down,
My footsteps sought his quarter of the town :
Calls at his house again, and yet again,
To get an interview, were all in vain :
Though not disheartened, I resolved to wait,
And catch him issuing from his private gate ;

But when this effort ultimately failed,
Hope sickened in me,—and despair prevailed.

Darkness had now returned,—and as it came
Abdallah's sorcery tingled through my frame ;—
The crowd,—the wizard,—and the wondrous screen,
With its sad sorrows there too truly seen ;
Home,—parents,—sisters,—Gertrude on her bier,
The double death,—the aggravated fear ;
That silent grief, which only mothers know
Who weep in secret,—and conceal their woe ;
These, and ten thousand melancholy things,
Home to my heart flocked close on fancy's wings ;
Each fond imagination, false or true,
Deepening old shadows, and creating new ;
Until sharp anguish, piercing through my soul
Led me far forward, without self-controul ;—
Nor would aught else than weariness or pain
Have made me pause upon the lonely plain.

At length I did so,—scarcely knowing why,
Near an enclosure open to the sky ;—
Part of whose walls had crumbled to the ground
Or stood half buried in a sandy mound :—
Whence to the gaze, outstretched on either hand
A vast expanse of Egypt's level land,—
Clothed in luxuriant corn, as yet still green,
Where the proud Nile rolled slowly through the scene,
Beneath the stars,—and flashing back their ray,
Like an enormous serpent on his way.
And there arose the Pyramids sublime
Those rocks of art amidst the waves of time :—
With Cairo, in the lap of silence laid,
Her battlemented towers involved in gloomy shade.

Worn with my walk, I cleared the broken wall,
Just as its echo answered to a call :—
Yet so it was, that on the inner side
I safely sank,—low couching,—undecried.

There as I lay concealed among the grass
And felt the lizards o'er my person pass,—
A band of Fellahs, naked, gaunt, and bold,
Bearing large baskets, leapt into the fold ;—
For such the enclosure proved, and numerous sheep
Moved as they entered, wakened from their sleep.

A mean—low hovel, in one corner stood,
Built of loose stones, rough reeds, and ruder wood :
Thither they entered, through its broken door,
And soon had lit a fire upon the floor.
Hooked from the ceiling a large cauldron hung
Down to the crackling flames,—and o'er them swung ;
Into whose hideous hollow, nothing loth,
Those brigand-shepherds poured a mess of broth ;
Then fed the faggots with papyrus-rind,
And closed the wicket, as the smoke declined.
Nor was it long, before their mirth encreased,

As hunger urged them to their homely feast :
Loud and more loud the boisterous laughter burst
In peals and catches from that hut accurst :
For plainly they were knaves, with spirits gay,
Carousing there in shame, and sharing out their prey.

Nearer I stole,—intent to hear and see
If to depart,—or stay,—would safest be.
A gaping chink, through which the fire-light glowed,
The fairest opportunity bestowed :—
So that outside, and unobserved by them,
I hid me by a fig-tree's crooked stem ;
Whose ample leaves, umbrageous o'er the thatch,
Securely covered any one on watch.

Around the embers, in most savage state,
An orb of outlaws,—those foul Fellahs sat ;
Their boiler, in the midst, kept low the glare,

Though, now and then, it rose with startling flare ;
And when it did, the illumination brief
Brought out each fearful feature, in relief,
Of many a fierce, incorrigible thief.—
Rage—hate—lust—cunning, frowned in sudden ire,
As though some artist painted them in fire ;
Whilst as their malice melted into mirth,
They hardly seemed like mortals of the earth ;
So mad their gesture, as one smote his breast,
Clenched his dark fingers, or his teeth comprest ;
Or as another plucked his neighbour's beard
And rolled his own eyes back, until they disappeared.

Huge morsels had been swallowed ;—and a gourd
Of wine was furnished from a private hoard :
The cauldron thrust aside,—each man in turn
Cast on more rubbish that the flame might burn ;
And one,—a reckless wretch,—jocosely said,

‘ Here let us sacrifice that christian’s head
‘ Sold us this night ;—whose body, in the Nile,
‘ Made our fair Abyssinian lady smile :—
‘ We swore to hide it,—lest its Frankish face,
‘ If the fresh trunk were found, might yield some trace,
‘ To lead the Cadi to our hiding-place !’

So saying, from a cloth, that murderer drew
The head of Lesley,—holding it in view,
With all its gory ghastliness of hue !—
Then as the other stirred the hissing brands,
He placed it on them, with relentless hands :
Singed was the neck,—and the projecting chin,
The whiskers,—eyebrows,—and the shrivelling skin !
Infernal sight !—as backwards I recoiled,
For my tongue choked me, whilst my spirits boiled :
O’er the stone fence, with but one leap I sprang,
For loud behind me, their carouse yet rang :

Fear—horror—vengeance—winged my weary feet
To reach the city, and the tale repeat :—
Or rouse the guard on duty, at their post,
And at the consulate alarm the host.—

All this was done,—and the whole scene of woe
Told at the Cadi's, ere a cock could crow :
Full twenty soldiers dashed across the plain
At sun-rise to arrest the bandit-train :—
Meanwhile,—a smaller party moved in state,
With the old judge and me, to Lesley's gate :
We found it fastened, as I found before,
And set to work at once to break the door.
That done,—pell-mell, we cut the matter short,
And rushed amazed into an open court :
No living soul appeared in house or hall,
Nor dog, nor slave, responded to our call.
At length, beside the staircase, where we stood,

An Arab pointed out a drop of blood;—
Whilst further on, at least two more were seen,
Though every thing around was neat and clean :
Following which marks, we terminated soon
Our search before the doors of a saloon.

Tw'as morning now,—and its all radiant ray
Shot through green lattices the light of day :
Upon a carpet, in the midst, there bowed
An Abyssinian female, in her shroud,
Prostrate in posture,—but when raised,—as proud !
Forthwith her features flashed upon my thought,
As those of that young slave my friend had bought ;
Her deep round eyes, where love might learn distrust
Dark looking-glasses full of life and lust :
Her ringlets, like a torrent, flowing down
Over a rich complexion olive-brown ;
Her nose more high than flat ;—her coral lips

Alive with mind, though under an eclipse ;
And opening oft, yet not for virtuous deeds,
As when the cleft pomegranate shews her seeds :
Such was that girl of Axum,—thus displayed
In robes, beneath her shroud, of loose brocade,
And trousers of gay taffety, enchased,
Up to the sash around her slender waist.

‘ Where is the Frank, thy lord ?’—the Cadi cried,
‘ From his beard severed’—the cool wretch replied :
‘ And hast thou murdered him?’—he sternly said,
‘ Thy slave,’—she answered, ‘ only sold his head :’
‘ What—sold thy master’—he exclaimed,—‘ and why ?’
She mildly murmured, ‘ Twas for jealousy !
‘ Some vile magician, (curses on his life,)
‘ Reminded him, that he had yet a wife :
‘ He would have left me soon ;—so in this room

‘ I let some brigands in, and sealed his doom :

‘ They carried off his wealth,’—then with a smile,

‘ I bad them cast the Giaour into the Nile !’

‘ Wretch,’—cried the Cadi,—keeping down his breath,

‘ What waitest thou for now ?’—she answered,—‘ Death !

‘ Revenge is sweet,—and I have drained the bowl

‘ With ten-fold imprecations on his soul !’

‘ Detain her,’—growled the judge, with a fierce frown,

‘ And search the waters, where they threw him down :’

At which command, our followers went, and found

Beneath the balcony—a bag well bound,

Of size in which base criminals are drowned :

Low in the mire it lay, through being thrown

From some vast height,—and burthened with a stone :

But up they brought it,—foul and dripping wet—

To open its contents on the bare parapet ;—
Where to our horror,—bloated, blue, and black
A headless corpse was tumbled from the sack !

Then did the Cadi stroke his beard,—and swear
Something of execration, mixed with prayer,—
And thus proceeded ;—‘ All the Franks are hogs,
‘ Go—bear that loathsome body to the dogs ;—
‘ But let the guilty Abyssinian slave
‘ Take its damp place—and find a righteous grave !’

My brain already swam, as in a dream,
For they had gagged her, long ere she could scream ;
Wrapt in her flowing robes, face, form, and feet
Were thrust, by force, into the mouth unmeet
Of that most vile receptacle,—whose clasp,
Fast closed beneath her rude tormentors’ grasp,—
Yet still appeared to heave, with many a voiceless gasp :

Alas ! for moments only ;—since the fall
Was to the grave of hell from that high wall :—
I saw not,—but just heard the splash below,
Swooning away with fear, and overcome with woe !

* * * * *

Twas all too true, I found on my return,
What for so long my heart had learned to mourn ;
Gertrude had died that very night and hour,
When old Abdallah had displayed his power,—
And with her, in her tomb, was laid her first-born flower!

A PIC-NIC.

THRICE had the year unfolded, one by one,
Its various seasons changing with the sun,—
Since homeward I returned from Egypt's shore
And found my lovely Gertrude was no more :
Oft we bemoaned with tears her bitter fate,
As though we each, in turn, had lost our mate.

It happened one autumnal day of shade,
A pic-nic party was proposed and made,
Some sweet adjoining scenery to survey
And close upon the coast our holiday :—
A line of lofty hills,—fair forms to me,
Just rose between our object and the sea.

The village there lay buried in a dell
Framed amidst cliff,—and rock,—and wood,—and fell :
Four ways, well-worn, were made to wind and meet
Just in the centre of a rural street,—
Where every lowly honeysuckled door
Blossomed with full perfume,—and promised more :
Each had its narrow garden, neat and square,
Laid out in paths, around the clipt parterre ;
'Through which ten thousand bees their labour plied,
Or clomb with weary wing the wall's warm side,
To revel in the rich virginia-bower,—
And sip the nectar from its opening flower ;
As with the vine, entangled on the thatch,
It cheered the window, and embraced the latch.
Hard by, appeared the smithy's leaning shed
With horses waiting to be shod and fed,—
Beside a sounding anvil, rarely still,
Its ceaseless blows re-echoed from the hill,—

Music to that stern arm, with tucked-up sleeve,
Which stirs the fire, as the fierce bellows heave ;—
And there the cart-house, with its broken wall
Wreathed with gay wild-flowers, fading in their fall,
Near the green verge of the o'ershadowed pool
Where cattle stand, beneath the trees, to cool ;
While barn-door fowls, with ducks and cackling geese
Mingle strange sounds, and barely keep the peace,—
Until the milk-maid comes, with sun-burnt brow,
And cleanly pail, to summon home her cow.—

Fair and yet painful scenes,—as when we trace
The failing features of a much-loved face ;
Heedless of all the suffering it may bring
We suck the honey, nor regard the sting :
The mind submits to swallow the alloy,
And agony itself assumes the mask of joy.—

Near these a park, where art had nature crowned,
Between the hills luxuriant spread around :
Clumps of rich foliage spotted o'er the scene
Like darker emeralds on a ground of green :
A sheet of water, shining with the sky
Lay in the centre,—lively as an eye ;—
With islands on its surface, where the trees
Waved to and fro before the fragrant breeze,—
As on it passed to kiss the extended grove
Along the southern shore, in sign of love :
There on a terrace, somewhat backward thrown,
The lordly mansion rose,—a pile of stone ;
With an old church upon the other side
Mantled in ivy,—some of which had died :
Here on a knoll, commanding all the view,
And glancing down a verdant avenue,
We dined in joyaunce underneath the tent
Of God's own azure, glorious, firmament :

And as the landscape mirthfulness inspired
So mirthfulness the scenery admired ;
Fresh bursts of humour from the party broke
As wit made wit,—and joke succeeded joke :
No festive banquets may with those compare
Held on the green,—and in the open air,—
Tabled by earth, with its ten thousand dies,
Fed by the fields,—and curtained by the skies.

When all were satisfied with cates and ale
I rose to botanize,—and they to sail :—
Over the hills they walked, and sought the shore,
Engaged their boat,—put off,—and plied the oar ;
Until at length a favourable breeze
Left the gay mariners to take their ease :
Fair was the wake that followed them behind
And all was fun,—and love,—and peace of mind.

Grey had the eyelids of the evening grown
When on that wave-worn beach I stood alone,
Awaiting their return :—and then it cleared
Just at the moment that their bark appeared.

For now the moon was up, in calmest form,
As though her face had never known a storm :
Like some coy virgin, through her fleecy veil
She eyed the shore,—the sea,—the snow-white sail ;
That single sail,—which now upon the crest
Of a dark foaming billow seemed to rest,
And then bound forward o'er the mighty main
Seen full in lustrous light,—but lost again ;—
That single sail,—which tall and taller grew
Like a pale spectre veering on the view ;—
For without sound it moved,—that any ear,
Far off as mine, could in the distance hear :
Until at length, bright sparkles from its prow

Dashed round and round,—and died in stars below ;
While something, like a voice amid the air,
Sighed, as its soft vibrations melted there :—
That single sail,—now near and nearer driven,
Borne onward on the breezy breath of heaven :—
The clouds above had wonderfully spread
Into a waste of vapours overhead ;—
Partly in portions, like aërial isles,
Reflected on the ocean crisped with smiles :
Part like vast continents, together rolled,
Of alpine masses bathed in molten gold ;
Through which the bow of Cynthia bore her way
In matchless glory gilding all the bay,—
Just as that single sail, within a line,
Crossed her fair path of radiance in the brine :—
When lo ! whilst ravished at the rapturous sight,
As its keel kissed the ladder of her light
Let down into the deep,—for so it seemed,

Thunder of thunders,—’twas as if one dreamed ;—
The sail had vanished !—thrice I rubbed mine eyes,
Staring half frantic on the sea and skies ;—
For now a shriek,—too like the shriek of death
Rode on the wind,—and quivered with its breath ;
Nor could I doubt, as on the beach I burned
But that the fatal boat had overturned !


It chanced some men were lugging out their net
From a near hovel, as that boat upset :—
Breathless I ran,—and ere I could explain,
They looked out once, nor asked to look again :
With matchless speed, a shallop of their own,
Till then locked up, was launched,—and we were gone ;
Myself on board, the needful tiller held
And urged each effort sympathy impelled :
With giant strokes the groaning billows glowed
As o’er their backs, we rather flew, than rowed :

Yet thirty minutes, (lamentable lot,)—
Elapsed before our oars could reach the spot :
My father still was floating near the boat
Holding a female buoyant by the throat :
‘Catch her,’—he cried,—‘thy mother,—take her in’—
But as he spoke,—his fingers left her chin,—
And down she went forthwith, like heavy lead,
The parted wave just bubbling o’er her head !—
‘ Oh—save her—save her,’—such the prayer I prayed,
‘ Alas !’ he answered,—‘twas a servant maid ;—
‘ I thought her the sweet soother of my care ;—
‘ So let me die ;’—he sank,—but by his hair
We snatched him singly from a watery grave,
As to the others, far too late to save !

Low in the waters my two sisters lay
Clasped in their mutual arms of pallid clay ;
Mouth against mouth in agony had prest

Like fair twin mermaids murdered breast to breast :
Their very tresses,—soft as the sea-weed,
Had formed a love-knot, from their fillets freed ;
So that the swarthy sailors scarcely bore
To draw them up,—and lay them on the shore :—
All night,—all day,—as the far tidings spread
The cliffs were thronged with searchers for the dead :
First one,—and then a second,—then a third
Were brought at last to land,—to be interred ;
Till the whole party, on the beach around,
Except my mother, finally were found.

Alas ! for me,—I gave myself to grief,—
With tears, which never seemed to bring relief :
And as a parent bird bewails her young,
Reft from their rifled nest, with saddest song,
Or flits about the melancholy bough,—
Where once they were in joy, but are not now :



So I, the case reversed, bemoaned in vain
That parent's loss,—which cuts the heart in twain :
To be without a sire, may well be borne,—
We miss him oft, and as we miss him, mourn :
But when that fount of love dries up in death
In which we bathed, ere yet we drew our breath ;
Where infancy, by pain or sorrow riven,
Would plunge for peace,—and ask no other heaven ;
Where childhood,—youth,—or even riper years
Found its first joys, without their thorns and fears ;
Then,—then the soul drinks deeply of distress
And knows the world to be a wilderness.—

Meanwhile the zealous sailors plumbed the deep
To ascertain where her remains might sleep :
They sounded every sand,—and every shoal,
Explored each rock,—each cavern,—and each hole ;
Sent up and down the long adjacent coast,—
Yet all in vain, to seek what we had lost :

Until by chance, it just occurred to some
To right the unlucky bark,—and tow her home :
There she lay tossing with her mast unseen
Downward, dependant, in the waters green ;
Whilst upward, on the waves, appeared her keel
Covered with sea fowls—puffins—shags—and teal,—
Screaming and fluttering,—as the intruders came
By starlight to turn up the fatal frame :—
They came,—but swift returned,—and vowed to me,
‘ The lady’s ghost was shining in the sea !’
Long time I reasoned,—pleaded,—bribed in vain,
Ere I could get them to embark again :
Yet when they did so,—I went with them too,
And had the whole developed at a view !

My much loved mother, when the bark went o’er,
Would with the rest have risen twice or more ;
Had not the one, or other, of her feet
Got fast entangled in the flapping sheet,—

Which held her headlong there,—and kept her down
Where though no doubt 'twas agony to drown,—
Death was too sweet for her, to wear, or leave a frown !
Her mantle,—spotless,—like the unsunned snow,
Had wrapt her round, as thus she slept below.
So hangs an icicle, all hoar and clear,—
When winter with his finger chains the year ;
Transparent beauty, glassed in fragile mould,
Light without life ;— all white,—and wet,—and cold !

Dreadful remembrances ;—as they revive,
Their woes and horrors seen once more alive :
So many funerals on a single day,—
Such near and dear ones ‘ blackening all the way ;’
So many females to one grave consigned,
Those better halves by far of human kind ;
While fell Destruction, mocking at the pain,
Sharpen his scythe,—and sighs to strike again.

THE LAWSUIT.

My father, now, and I were left alone,—
With minds of differing view, and differing tone :
There was no general point, where we agreed
Either in thought,—or wish,—or word,—or deed ;
Save when pale memory pointed to the past,
And from us both the tears would trickle fast.

He was a man about the middle size,—
With narrow brow,—and twinkling, anxious eyes :
Looking strait forward, they were scarce a pair,
And only when close shut seemed free from care :
His nose was red, and puckered by disease,

With a low sneer, as though about to sneeze :
The cheek, on either side, was thin and hard,
Through sores, of younger years, much scathed, and
scarred :

There was no lineament, where love might trace
The source of smiles, or laughter in his face :—
His mouth was wide,—and somewhat drawn awry,
Beardless and pimpled,—withering and dry :—
A shock of hair rose shaggy on his head
Straggling behind, o'er ample shoulders spread :
Nor were his features ever seen to glow,
Except in wrath, and then that wrath was woe.
He often thought he might be going mad,
Which made his spirits always sick or sad :
Restless he sat,—and awkward when he rode,
And when he walked,—his feet were pigeon-toed.

We lived for years with little to relate,
Till an old miser left him his estate ;—

A distant relative, without a friend,
To think about him previous to his end :
For no one dreamt how much he had to spare,—
All deeming it a long arranged affair,
That his vast hall was for his legal heir.
It proved not so ;—since though he ne'er would say
What he should do,—he willed it all away,—
(Reciting powers that placed it in his hands)
And gave my father both his house and lands.

We entered, therefore, on this large domain
Amidst the plaudits of a cringing train :
Flatterers threw wide the mansion's lordly door,
To wish us joy,—and wish us dead much more :—
Bells rang,—men met,—the neighbourhood was raised,
Caps were plucked off,—at night the bonfires blazed :
Praise led the long procession, far and near,
Interest and self bade welcome to their cheer—
Whilst envy smiled in front, but murmured in the rear.

The manor house was large,—antique,—and square,
With battlemented front of noble air :—
The walls were unhewn stone,—encased with brick,
Red,—and yet grey with age,—well laid and thick :
The chimnies rose in stacks of various forms
Twisted and zigzag,—dark with smoke and storms :
Around were gardens,—pastures,—streams, and groves,
With clipt box hedges, and their three alcoves :
Within, were dull apartments wrapt in gloom,
Hung with torn tapestry frowning round each room,—
Where sunbeams, through the windows great and small,
Strayed in, like strangers, when they shone at all ;
And old carved mantel-pieces, made of oak,
Their founder's wealth, if not his taste bespoke.
Leading to these were numerous corridors
With panelled wainscots, and smooth polished floors,—
Diverging from the hall, whose gothic roof
Had echoed often to the knight's steel hoof,

In years of war and wassail, hue and cry,
When virtue wore the shield of chivalry !
Upstairs, lay cold damp chambers,—tombs of flies
Linked by a labyrinth of galleries,—
Adorned with labours large of needle-work,
And monsters of the loom, where mice might lurk.
Huge staring portraits looked out here and there
From frames once gilded,—long beyond repair ;
Emblems of men and manners out of mind,
In life's swift race-course lost, or left behind.

Meanwhile the heir-at-law had filed a bill
In chancery—against the miser's will.—
Prodigious litigation now ensued,
And many an anxious thought would oft intrude.
The lawyers smiled alone,—those limbs of sin
Who grow so fat, when all beside grow thin !
Reams upon reams of paper were consumed,

Souls upon souls, through perjury were doomed :
Words warred with words,—and brains encountered
 brains,
Fed with full fees,—the Pigmies and the Cranes !
Commissions issued under the great seal,
Whereon attornies dined with wondrous zeal :
Bills begat bills, demanding fresh replies,
Each hatching into life fresh swarms of lies :
Opinions with opinions,—paid for,—strove,—
The flocks decaying, though injustice throve ;
While courts above, intolerably slow,
Reversed the sentences of courts below.

The matter hinged upon a certain deed,
Which, if we could but find,—we must succeed :
And oh ! with what intensity of thought
My care-worn father that dear treasure sought ;—
But sought in vain for years :—till legal strength

(The suit protracted to its utmost length)
Could raise no point, which might be argued more,
Or yield another brief of golden ore.
The contest therefore slackened for the prey,—
Solicitors and barristers, at bay,
Upon their arms, like alligators lay ;
For in one week, a final hearing prest
Which was to set the litigants at rest.

Twas now the depth of winter, drear and cold,
As though the world itself were getting old :
When late at night, beside my chamber fire,
I weighed the prospects of myself and sire :
Oft-times, the tempest rattling on the pane
Made me look round, and marvel at the rain ;
And then returning to the cheerful coals,
My feet were up,—until I scorched their soles :
Louder and louder roared the gusty gale,

As the sleet hardened into ice and hail :—
Once more I stirred the grate, to see it flare,
And fill the room with its reflected glare,—
Myself thrown back into an easy chair :
Whence gazing upwards through a puff of smoke
Methought a portrait, panneled in the oak,
Gazed down again at me,—and almost spoke !

The picture was a strange one,—brisk and big
Its full face scowled from underneath a wig ;—
Where much of self-importance seemed to press
Into its service wit and wickedness :—
But stranger far than these,—there stood beside,
The form of death,—as if to mock his pride ;
And people said some dark traditions ran
That death had made a compact with this man,—
To serve him, like a slave, for one whole year
When he would often come,—and disappear !

They added further,—that the infernal Squire,
For so they called him,—lodged a certain friar,—
Who taught him arts, mechanical and deep,
With other secrets, which they chose to keep.

Such was the portrait, which now fixed mine eye
Through its pale stare—so ghostly—from on high :
Methought it moved, as if a voice would fall
From lips that seemed to whisper on the wall ;—
And yet 'twas all so silent, one could hear
Each hailstone pattering on the window drear :
Up to my throat the throbbing heart had flown
And had I spoke,—it must have been a groan :—
Tremendous gaze,—petrific,—palsying,—pale,
Like the dread touch of the torpedo's tail ;
Or as though some catastrophe combined
The world of matter and the world of mind,—
Myself the point of contact,—while the shock

Made me a statue motionless as rock !
Tremendous gaze,—and then methought its hand
Upraised itself in way of stern command,—
And pointed thrice,—where on the tapestry drawn
Two griffins clawed the air, and ate a fawn :—
Thither it pointed, with a stony look,
It pointed thrice,—and thrice the arras shook !

An hour at least elapsed ere sense returned,
For low the fire and candles both had burned :
At length I started,—stirred the smouldering grate,
Snuffed the wan wicks, nor felt afraid of fate :
From its close case a sharp long knife I drew
And ripped the embroidered griffins through and
through :

Behind them were old shutters, closely prest,
With iron studs,—one larger than the rest :
Boldly I smote it with my utmost might,

Once and again,—at that still hour of night ;—
When lo ! as though the spell had done its worst
A pair of folding valves asunder burst ;
And from within, arrayed in winding sheet,
Forth stalked a skeleton with fleshless feet,—
In bony horror,—creaking upon springs,
O'er which a mantle fell, like shattered wings :
While as the room around me seemed to reel
Its withered arm, outstretched on joints of steel,
Extended towards me, so that I might read,
In very truth, the looked for,—long lost deed !

This sight remanned me from my far recoil,
As like a hawk, I pounced upon the spoil ;—
Finger, by finger, hastening to unclasp
That stiff, stern, fist's articulated grasp :—
Thus comprehending the traditions dire
Connected with the famed infernal Squire ;

Who doubtless had prepared this strange machine
To pass for a magician in his mien ;—
And at his death the parchment trust retain
Till chance, or courage should the treasure gain.
Soon as the morning through my curtains crept
I left my pillow,—never having slept :—
The tears streamed copious from my father's eyes
Of joy,—when he beheld, and clutched the prize :
Nor was his wonder less, when we explored
The maniac folly, which had hid the hoard :
Without delay we hurried up to town,—
Produced the deed,—and set the lawyers down ;
Yet not alas ! till they had fleeced us well
And left us of the estate a melancholy shell !

On our return towards home, we lodged half-way,
Intending to proceed the following day :—
The Inn was large and full,—a living hive

Of human beings, ere we could arrive ;
So that when there, we only had two beds,
In one small garret, where to lay our heads :
Yet what, like weariness, can ever steep
The soul and body in delicious sleep ?
We found it so, and slumbered,—till I woke—
Stunned with fierce shrieks and cries, and choked with
smoke :

Loud and more loud arose the deafening din
Of throngs below, without, and throngs within.
The flames upcurled around in many a spire
Until the very windows spouted fire :—
Glass,—framework,—timbers,—all one ruin made
Hissing with torrents,—as ten engines played :
High o'er the whole there hung a reddening cloud
Like the fell throne of death above the crowd,—
Where dark destruction his sad seat assumes
Catching the glare of Tophet on his plumes !

There was no time to lose : and from his bed
My father I had rescued by the head,—
And on my shoulders placing him,—began
To rush down stairs, with the bewildered man ;
When not the landing fairly could we reach
Ere he sprang from me, foaming in his speech ;—
‘The deed,—the deed,’—he said,—and back once more
He flew to fetch it,—and was at the door,—
When, with a hideous crash, down went the floor !
Volumes of sparkles flashed on every side,
But the heat smote me, just as I had cried ;—
And day-light, breaking, disenthralled my soul
From torturing Memory’s fanciful control.

SAUL THE SON OF CIS.

A FRAGMENT.

I.

‘Go—call me Jesse’s son,’—the monarch cried,
And the bright lance gleamed quivering in his hand :
‘Let the king live for ever,’—none replied,
But with one rush upsprang a faithful band
To throw themselves upon him, in his pride,
For the foul spirit struggled for command,
In his fierce visage:—pale and red it turned
As reason ebbed and flowed, or choler burned !

II.

Now,—now it rose,—and scarce five captains held
The royal maniac in their iron grasp :
His eyes flashed fire, and every sinew swelled
With agony,—in striving to unclasp
Their arms united,—not to be repelled,
But coiled the stronger round, like asp on asp ;
While his hot lips cast out the frothy foam
Such as a sea upthrows in troubled gloom.

III.

When lo ! the minstrel came, fearless of harm,
With rustic weapons, staff, and stone, and sling :
His left hand bore the lyre, which breathed a charm
Of sweet enchantment swept from every string ;
Such as the ravening lion could disarm,
Or stay the eagle on her towering wing ;
Whilst o'er the blooming features of his youth
Blended—the flush of haste—with beams of truth,

IV.

From his fair countenance divinely shining,—

Like the sun's radiance from a vernal cloud
Of fleecy vapours, on the hills reclining

At dawn of day, when ruffling breezes crowd
Their whiteness into folds, which seem enshrining

The solar glories in a snowy shroud ;
So looked the harper at what might appal
The keenest glance that gazed,—the face of Saul !

V.

He paused,—yet trembled not,—but cast aside

His pastoral armour, and assumed the lyre :
Amazement seized the monarch,—madness died

As at the voice of some seraphic quire :
The attendants loosed their hold,—and backward hied,

All wondering, as he swept each silvery wire,
Soothing the sorrows of those silenced halls,
Like murmurs heard of distant water-falls ;

VI.

Or like soft sighs of midnight gales low creeping
Through groves of lofty palms, from leaf to leaf;
Or the sweet song of Philomela keeping
Her lonely vigils, mindful of her grief;
Or the low moan of a far ocean sweeping
Wave after wave upon some rocky reef,—
That chafes their billowy pride :—so rose and fell
The magic numbers of the minstrel's shell.

VII.

He sang how life is short,—a fleeting shade,—
A vapour,—or the measure of a span :
Frail as the flower, which only forms to fade,—
Or bud that bursts,—yet ere an eye can scan
Its verdure vanishing, sharp storms invade
The bough whereon it withers,—such is man !
Mean as the moth, that before morning dies,
Or as the dust, which with the whirlwind flies.

VIII.

Then soared his theme,—transcendantly ascending
Though nature nascent at her Maker's nod,—
How with ten thousand seraphim attending
Sublime on wheels in wheels of stars He trod,
With darkness infinite effulgence blending—
Lest all should melt before the march of God :
Hark ! through the vasty void,—‘ Let there be light,’
ONE said,—and glittering through the vault of night,

IX.

She came, new-born,—over the paths of heaven
Scattering her beauteous Beautiful : each world
Smiled peace serene, as the first morn was given,
And its own bosom drops of dew impearled ;
Nor less, when to that day succeeded Even
With pensive brow, and mists around her furled,
From pole to pole,—smoothing her downy plume,
To brood upon the blaze, with grateful gloom.

X

He sang of love divine,—and how it falls

Fair on the wreck of a rebellious race,

Like the moon's radiance gilding the gray walls

Of palaces once clothed with peerless grace,—

But where at night the boding bird now calls,

And Havoc desolates the lonely place

Of what was perfect once : such scenes men view in

The realm that weeps around the throne of Ruin !

XI.

The royal maniac listened to the sound,—

And all his troubled thoughts appeared to flee ;

A wonted look benignly spread around

Like a sweet calm o'er the deceitful sea :

He stood erect,—and gazed,—nor sternly frowned

On those, who just before of liberty

Had honestly deprived his frenzied form,—

Lest he should wound himself in such a storm.

XII.

Again the minstrel touched the mighty chords

With matchless hand, and sang celestial wars
Of fallen but angelic hosts, whose swords

Dared to unsheath above; when from the stars
Down were they hurled to hell,—where Satan lords

His foul dominion o'er them,—nor unbars
Hope their drear prison ever! oh condition
Of sad despair,— the meed of their ambition!

XIII.

Ambition! the reproof by kings so feared

Dropt as it ever does, like drops of gall;
Once more his head the evil spirit reared

And then had David, by the hand of Saul,
Died,—for the javelin in his grasp appeared,—

When heaven that crime averted; and the wall
Received the winged weapon,—where it trembled,
And the pale king, aghast, his rage dissembled,—

XIV.

For a short moment, in which David fled,
But in his haste let fall that instrument
Which had so lately such sweet influence shed,
And on which now the chief, his wrath to vent,
Trampled and stamped—and from their polished bed
The tuneful wires, with fruitless fury rent ;
Then scattered here and there the whole around,
Laughing to see their fragments on the ground !

XV.

Is there not ever a peculiar sadness
In looking on the fragments of a lyre ?
Whose chords have oft breathed harmony and gladness
Mingling with human voice, or dulcet quire,
All silent now !—no more shall moody madness
Listen to its soft melody ; whilst higher
Perchance some look, and see in it the token
Of life's illusions all dissolved and broken !

XVI.

The soul is as a harp of tender strings,
Like that of Judah, on her tree of sorrow,
Where every breath that meditation brings
Some echoed note of woe is made to borrow,—
Sweetened at times with touch of joy, from wings
Of passing angels swept; which, ere the morrow,
Is lost and caught away,—no sooner known
Than like some fair, but frightened warbler, gone!

XVII.

But to revert to Saul :—he called his son,
His warrior-son, the noble Jonathan :
A slave informed him that the prince with none
Of his attendants, saving a young man,
Was absent in the fields; and ev'n that one
Went but just far enough, as on he ran,
To see that David came; at which the prince
Bade him go back,—nor had they seen him since.

XVIII.

Then was Saul's anger kindled,—‘What delusion,’
He cried, ‘has taken one and then another :
‘Has he not chosen to his own confusion,—
‘Curst son of his perverse, rebellious mother,—
‘That sprig of Jesse? whom a vile intrusion
‘Has planted here; and yet more like a brother,
‘He loves him, nor abhors his rash design
‘To root from out this kingdom me and mine!’

XIX.

Vain were his words,—the son he sought had hied
Towards an adjacent valley, where the harper
Was wont to wander on an eventide,—
Beside a river smoother than the Pharpar :
Lone was that place and calm : the sound had died
Of the yoked heifer's lowing ; but the sharper
Notes of the bittern whistled, loud and shrill,
From a near grove, which clothed the sloping hill.

XX.

Tw'as sunset,—and a rosy flood of glory
O'er the far west, in waves of light, retired,—
While Hermon's head, and Lebanon all hoary,
Glowed with reflected radiance, as if fired ;
And rising zephyrs whispered their soft story
Through the low vale, with voice that seemed inspired,
So soothingly they breathed, and flocks around
Sunk into slumber, as with magic bound ;—

XXI.

For the first star was up, and from the sky
Shed beautifully her irradiant smile,
Like the sweet rapture of a seraph's eye
Or sunlit summit of some distant isle ;—
So shone the lovely watcher's sphere on high
As if alone, though for a little while,—
Till one, and then another, hung her beacon
Bright in the blue abyss, and you might reckon

XXII.

Myriads on myriads, thro' night's deep vault twinkling,
Hosts as it were of heavenly Cyclades;—
And now a gray ascending mist was sprinkling
With silvery dew the flowers and waving trees,
While gentle gales with odorous pinions wrinkling
The stream's clear surface, (like a mind at ease
Just agitated with some sudden joy,)—
Gave all the scene its charms without alloy.

XXIII.

The partridge from her lowly nest had started,
As Jonathan before his friend appeared,—
With whom, in his affliction, he had smarmed,
And in his wealth, had sympathized or feared;
But knowing now they would be shortly parted,
Perhaps for ever,—each the other cheered
With interchange of kindness, which like balm
Drops on the wounded mind; or like that calm

XXIV.

Which smooths in halcyon hour the face of ocean ;

But we forbear ; the prince we must describe ;

He was a man whose life was all devotion,

Whose soul not ev'n paternal realms could bribe,—

Who loved his father's people with emotion

As though he were the child of every tribe,—

Born to protect them,—and his laurels gather

Not for his own young brow, but theirs the rather.

XXV.

He looked on David, as we fix an eye

On some well freighted bark, that quits the land,

Bound for a wealthier port ; or as on high

We watch an eagle, when her wings expand

To meet the sun ascending in the sky,

Until she looks no bigger than a hand,—

And then at once has vanished from the sight

Lost in the lustre of celestial light :—

XXVI.

So smiled he on the youth, that stood before him,
Whom better far he loved than his own soul ;
Though not unknowing, that the prophet o'er him
Had poured the anointing oil,—and that the whole
Kingdom of Israel and of Judah bore him
Upon their hearts, as worthy to control
Their restless spirit ; yet no envious cloud
Shadowed his mind,—which now he thus avowed ;

XXVII.

‘ Believe me, son of Jesse, that I never
‘ Sighed to put on my head this thorny crown,
‘ Which sits so ill upon my sire : for ever
‘ Since the first day, that called him to renown,
‘ He hates the hour, I know, which then did sever
‘ Us from the shelter of our native town,—
‘ Where in retirement, and shade obscure,
‘ Ambition tempted not with lying lure.

XXVIII.

‘ But since the Lord of heaven and earth hath chosen
 ‘ Thee to exalt upon my father’s throne,—
‘ Swear to me, that at last I may repose on
 ‘ Thine oath, with comfort, when forlorn and lone,
‘ The arrow from death’s angel shall have frozen
 ‘ This arm, which now can well befriend my own,
‘ But then shall not be able:—Swear, I say,
‘ My sons to shelter till thy latest day?—

XXIX.

This David did,—and Jonathan was filled
 With grateful satisfaction, joy, and peace ;
Then stript himself of girdle, sword, and shield,
 To put them on his friend,—nor yet could cease
From kindly converse, until morn revealed
 Her saffron eyelids, opening with encrease
Of golden light,—which o’er the mountains grew
As night her starry van in haste withdrew.

XXX. * * * LVIII.

Now after Samuel the Seer was dead,
The Philistines had gathered all their forces
To fight with Israel ; who, with Saul their head,
Encamped in trepidation at the sources
Of the fair fountains in Jezreel,—which spread
Through mount Gilboa, their meandering courses :
There when the hebrew king beheld assembled
His adversaries' power, he greatly trembled :—

LIX.

And when, enquiring upon every hand,
He found no answer sent him from the Lord,—
He asked his servants,—‘ Is there in the land
‘ A woman yet remaining, at whose word,
‘ Through her Familiar, we may understand
‘ Whether or no a victory waits our sword ? ’—
‘ One still exists in Endor,’—they replied ;
‘ Then come to me at dead of night,’—he sighed !

LX.

The sun had sunk into the western ocean

Whose deep still waters, tinged with purple, lay
Just like a sleeping infant, without motion,

Or only such, as when there oft will play
A passing smile of pleasure, or devotion,

O'er its sweet countenance :—like one vast bay
The boundless prospect blended in the view
With heaven's fair roof serene of brightening blue,—

LXI.

Now graced with living sapphires,—as they seemed

To sail the calm abyss,—or lost behind
The clouds, that looked like islands, whence they beamed

Dim through their fleecy skirts,—and then declined :
When lo ! the moon arose,—whose radiance streamed

From her fair orb, as from a seraph's mind :
Her silver light had glanced on sheets of water,—
But, in a moment, from the opposite quarter

LXII.

There moved a silent cloud, like a man's hand,
Ascending gradually,—but swelling fast ;
Toward east and west soon hastening to expand,
With lowering aspect, until it had past
Upward ;—though on the sea it took its stand
Gigantic,—pregnant with typhonian blast ;
And only pausing for the appointed hour
To shake the firmament, with shower on shower,

LXIII.

Of hail and tempest ;—sultriness encumbers
All the hushed atmosphere : yet Saul was sleeping,
Till Abner came to rouse him from his slumbers
And tell him of the watch he had been keeping :
Around him slept in ranks the marshalled numbers
Whose dark thick locks the nightly dews were steeping,
And at each bolster stood erect a spear
For fight prepared,—if enemy were near.

LXIV.

Night's moisture rusted upon every helm ;

Nathless,—the soldiers had forgot their toil,
Save one whom misery seemed to overwhelm,

Who pressed alike in arms the unwholesome soil ;
And who, though monarch of Judea's realm,

Into deep wrath had changed the holy oil
Once shed upon his brow : but Abner woke
His master,—‘ Ha !’ he cried,—‘ my sword,—my cloak,

LXV.

‘ Are they both ready ? ’—Then as if afraid,

He changed his voice, and in a smothered tone
Asked Abner to exchange his meaner blade,

For that rich royal one, with many a stone
Adorned,—and by a Tyrian artist made :

Which done,—Saul muttered,—‘ Let us now be gone ;
‘ This murky night is fair for our intent ! ’—
So through the troops asleep they softly went.

LXVI.

Scarce had they cleared each far outlying post
Ere the pent storm began its furious raging :
The light of all the ethereal lamps was lost
And cloud with cloud a fearful war was waging :
Three rough ravines, that had been scarcely crost,
Filled with the mountain-torrents ; nor the assuaging
Glow of the azure overhead was given,—
For blackness covered the whole face of heaven ;

LXVII.

Save that at intervals, the scene frowned brightening
With vivid,—quick,—and instantaneous ray,
Followed by thicker darkness. ‘ Twas the lightning
Alone that glowed, and forky was its play ;
The awful horror of the tempest heightening
With its red glare,—and there appeared no way
Of shelter or escape ; whilst hail and rain
In tides of desolation swept the plain.

LXVIII.

A woody hill's scarp'd side they had to climb
As the deep thunders echoed, peal on peal,
Rending the rocks,—which from their brows sublime
Shook the tall cedars, as they seemed to reel
With the loud whirlwind's force. 'Twas as if Time
Knew that his end was near,—and would reveal
His power of ruin,—ere he must expire
With nature, upon nature's funeral fire!

LXIX.

Just then a friendly cavern, by the side
Of the rough slippery road appeared to offer
Its temporary refuge, from the wide
And wasteful hurricane :—'this seems to proffer
'Shelter at least,'—one of Saul's servants cried—
'From Baal's mercy,'—said his fellow scoffer :
'Dry fuel too—Ha! this is quite amazing ;'—
For by the spot a blasted pine was blazing.

LXX.

But Saul perceived it not,—or if he did,
He heeded it as little,—when he gave
An inward groan,—and in his mantle hid
His face,—and sat him lonely in the cave,
Near to the mouth,—as if he would be rid
Of such society : the men then clave
The burning brand, which served them for a torch ;
While yet their king remained beneath the porch

LXXI.

Of the outjutting rock,—and there unseen,
As he imagined vainly by the rest,—
He loosened to his wounded pride the rein,
And amidst wailing winds his woes exprest :
‘Ye heavens,’ he cried,—‘what may this hurly mean ?
‘Or do ye mock the torments of my breast,
‘By this exterior storm and agitation,—
‘Types of my own internal perturbation ?

LXXII.

‘In vain have I invoked the awful Urim
 ‘Whose lustre paled on every voiceless gem ;
‘And vainly have been cast the lots of Purim⁽²⁾
 ‘Fool that I was to think of trusting them !
‘Accursed thought !—that I should e’er adjure him
 ‘To guard the glory of my diadem,—
‘Whom the base gentiles own ! But I was left
‘A mouldering pillar of support bereft :

LXXIII.

‘Nor dream, nor nightly vision aught availeth
 ‘To know the mind of God,—who rules above ;
‘And this young son of Jesse Israel haileth
 ‘As the sole monarch of her faithful love :
‘Whilst my own heart with trembling terror faileth
 ‘Cowering before him,—like a timorous dove,—
‘Whose course the eagle crosseth ! Hope—farewell !
‘Come on Despair—this bosom is thy hell !

LXXIV.

‘ Yet oh ! the years, when I was young and gay
‘ In innocent obscurity,—nor had
‘ A thought, that ever should arise the day
‘ That placed upon my brow a crown,—and clad
‘ These limbs in gorgeous purple,—mock array,
‘ Making the misery it hides, more sad ;—
‘ Ah ! could one hour of youth just now return
‘ ’Twould cool the fire, with which I ever burn !

LXXV.

‘ Thrice happy years !—and cursed be that morning
‘ Which saw the seer anoint this head with oil ;
‘ May no bright beam its eyelids e’er adorning
‘ Shed radiance over man’s detested toil ;
‘ But let the light, that day of misery scorning,
‘ Be darkness,—while dismay and foul turmoil
‘ Wither these realms,—which have beheld me great,
‘ And witness now my execrable fate.—

LXXVI.

‘ Yea,—cursed be this land of fair Judea—
 ‘ Let all her glory,—all her beauty cease ;
‘ A prey to Babylon, or Idumea,—
 ‘ Who shall devour her pasture’s rich increase,
‘ Her wine and oil,—nor ever let her see a
 ‘ Season of sweet repose, or golden peace :
‘ But let Philistia, or some deadlier foe
‘ O’erwhelm her with a weight of wasteful woe.

LXXVII.

‘ Let her be like to Sodom,—let her borrow
 ‘ Woes from those cities which the Lord o’erthrew ;
‘ Let her be desert, and a land of sorrow—
 ‘ Stranger to gracious rain, or drops of dew !
‘ But stay—the storm hath lessened—and to morrow
 ‘ Yon silent vale with corpses shall bestrew ;
‘ And mine, perchance, may mingle there with those
‘ Beneath whose feet the thick rank grass now grows,—

LXXVIII.

‘ Soon to wave o’er them. Yes—to morrow’s sun
‘ Shall see me conqueror, or conquered ! Why
‘ Should I then fear, since of the twain, but one
‘ Can happen to me ; and if called to die,—
‘ The goal is earlier gained,—that deed is done
‘ Which dogs alone defer : nor shall I lie
‘ Without avengers ;—nor my blood inglorious
‘ Wash the proud feet of those who are victorious !

LXXIX.

‘ And yet to know what will the morrow bring
‘ Man’s spirit sighs for.—The revolving season
‘ Fades—and a new succeeds ; to winter, spring—
‘ To summer, autumn—and so on—while reason
‘ Augurs aright of nature, yet can fling
‘ No glance o’er future time, although time flees on
‘ Swifter than weaver’s shuttle,—or the shroud
‘ Of yon spent whirlwind, driving cloud on cloud.

LXXX.

‘To morrow—well, and what befalls me then?

‘Answer ye prophets, priests, and hoary sages:

‘Scan the dark future,—if ye are wiser men

‘Than we—and of the silent tide of ages

‘Wake the yet slumbering waves, which in their den

‘Of darkness, a futurity yet cages!—

‘Say—shall a stream of glory waft me down

‘The vale of life,—or swallow up my crown?’

LXXXI.

He ceased,—and rushing forward, gave command

That they should follow;—but the way was steep,

And oft required the use of foot and hand

The rugged and impervious path to keep,—

Which sometimes lay o’er torrents choked with sand,

Or with loud cataracts made rough and deep:

While the wet forests shook at every blast

A ceaseless shower upon them, as they passed.

LXXXII.

Yet was the prospect clearing,—and the arch
Of heaven had opened her expansiveness,
Once more with stars, to light them on their march
As the gale's piping echoed less and less;—
And softer sounds were whispered from the larch
Or waving cedar,—as each seemed to dress
Her foliage ruffled after such commotion,
All heaving like the billows of an ocean.—

LXXXIII.

The straggling skirts of the subsiding storm
Were scattered here and there by the sweet breath
Of a less boisterous breeze; but with the form
Of dark, rent, banners of the host of death,—
Such was their blackness still.—The wanderers, warm
With toil, had reached a bare and barren heath,
Parcel of Endor's vale,—enclosed in groves,—
Through which the Sorceress solitary roves.

LXXXIV.

There, through the murky gloom, they saw her gather

Henbane and hemlock, wet with lunar dew,—

Culling with care those deadliest herbs the rather

Than many a vernal flower, which waved its hue

Of scarlet,—purple,—or of saffron; are there

Any,—who can reject the violet's blue?—

Yet she did,—and was trampling under foot

Its virgin loveliness,—for lo! a root

LXXXV.

Of aconite had caught her pallid gaze,

Whereon an eft was making its slow meal;—

And as she stooped,—the moon's reflected rays

Gleamed for a moment from her crooked steel,

Then sank into a cloud of vapoury haze

As shuddering the fell harpy to reveal,—

Her eager search pursuing:—with keen glance

She measured oft the ground—until askance

LXXXVI.

Through the dim veil of night she looked afar,
The footsteps coming on of pilgrims three;—
Towards whom, she imprecated,—‘Thou curst star
‘Malignant ever both to hell and me,—
‘What sounds are these that on my senses jar?’
She paused to skulk into a splintered tree;
Which screened her, whilst they near and nearer drew:
But having passed, and turned,—she fronts their view.

LXXXVII.

’Twas fearful,—for within a hollow oak,
Withered and scorched with lightnings from above,
The foul witch stood,—nor yet had either spoke
For not a tongue could find the power to move;
And nought beside the deathlike silence broke
That deepened all the horrors of the grove:
She scowled like night,—that night ere yet was born
The starry host, or Cynthia’s silver horn.

LXXXVIII.

Revolving times o'er her unhallowed brow

Nor snowy hairs, nor sacred reverence shed ;

Hate had there reared her throne, one knew not how,

The lineaments of woman all were fled,—

Hell's impress had effaced them !—and the bough

That raised its forked form above her head,

Leafless,—and scathed,—and motionless,—and seared,

An awful image of herself appeared !—

LXXXIX.

At length, the anxious monarch in disguise

Addressed with quivering lips the infernal dame ;

‘ Beneath the rage of these inclement skies

‘ These friends and I to hear thy wisdom came ;

‘ And now, we pray thee, by thy power devise

‘ Means to bring up the soul whom I shall name :

‘ So that thy terrible Familiar Spirit

‘ May yield thee here the just rewards of merit.’

XC.

The woman answered,—‘Hast thou never heard
‘What Saul, that bloody tyrant, hath been doing?
‘How through Judea’s land, with fire and sword,
‘Me and my sisters he hath been pursuing,—
‘Although, if right I deem, the fatal word
‘Is now gone forth for his own rack and ruin!
‘Then wherefore layest thou this snare for me—
‘Have I e’er injured either thine,—or thee?’

XCI.

The king of Israel trembled, as she uttered
Bitter reproaches on him, then unknowing
The sovereign she addressed : for deep were guttered
Her cheeks with tears, which once ne’er ceased their
 flowing,
And now had drained her sunken orbs : she muttered
‘Swear to me,’—and the suppliant lowly bowing,
Swore to her by the Lord who lives for ever,—
That punishment for this should touch her never !

XCII.

Then turned they, through the thickets, toward a path

Inclining far below with many a bend,—

Like the old famous labyrinth, which hath

In legendary lore no restful end :—

Whilst oft they listened to what seemed the wrath

Of lions roaring, as their steps descend

Over a rude—rough—rocky—devious way

Leading them downward from the realms of day.

XCIII.

And now before their eyes a mountain stood

Awful and high,—whose storm-rent base was cloven,

Whilst all above frowned dark impending wood

Forest with forest deeply interwoven,—

O'ershadowing with its undulative load

The yawn that arched below,—which like an oven

Opened its smoking jaws ;—for sulphur thence

Tainted the flagging air with pestilence !

XCIV.

Saul and the Sybil plunged into the glen
Quaking with terror as they stumbled on,—
Till far and farther were the hauuts of men
And every sign of upper air seemed gone :
The stillness deepened till they stopt,—and then
Both were at once within a valley lone :—
The passage through the mountain had its exit
Like a bad actor, when one least expects it.

XCV.

Yet 'twas no muse's haunt, or leafy shade,
That lay before him, horror-struck and weary ;
No sweet seclusion, in a feathered glade,
With pebbly streamlet's gurgling song, to cheer the
Wanderer that hies him there ;—for fire had made
The face of nature desolate and dreary,—
Breaking at intervals from out the ground,
Whence rose the steamy smoke with hissing sound.

XCVI.

The enormous crater of a vast volcano
Presented the vast vestibule of death,—
To whose dread shadowy entrance, none the way know,
Save whom she guides, as to the realms beneath;
And who, when hastening backward, dare betray no
Scenes that they saw upon that dismal heath,
O'er which the haggard Sybil bade him follow:
It was a horrid chasm, deep and hollow,—

XCVII.

Lined with low stunted brushwood, whose burnt branches
Sheltered no turtle's nest;—nor tuneful bird
Ever at morning on her pinion launches
Thence into air;—nor murmur there was heard,
Of the glad mother, as at noon she staunches
Her callow young ones' appetite;—nor stirred
The zephyr's breath among those withered leaves,—
Few as they were, and falling;—nor receives

XCVIII.

That dell its tribute from the opening flower
For none can blossom there!—Saul onward passed,
And felt the silence of the midnight hour
Dreadful,—and oft preferred the piping blast
That buffeted with all its stormy power,
Upon his journey thitherward:—at last
They reached the margin of a lake, which spread
In stagnant stillness through its craggy bed.

XCIX.

A few brief gusts, if winds might blow, could waft a
Boat o'er the bosom of that waveless sea,
Where no long wake is seen to follow after
The keel that parts its surface silently;
But a blue flame flits from the liquid naphtha
(Which stains the verge as with a leprosy)
And like some fearful phantom, seems to hover
Restless and pale, the misery to discover

C.

Brooding for ever there.—Amidst the bushes

Lay an old rotten and dismantled bark,
Concealed beneath rank weeds, and ranker rushes,
That made it hard to find her in the dark :

But when they had,—just as a crocodile crushes

Its way into the water,—so this ark,
At length found buoyant, floated slow and creaky,
With such a burthen almost more than leaky :

CI.

It lurched,—and rolled,—yet gained the nether side,

With oars that broke e'er they could reach the land ;
But there the portal, they approached, full wide

Gaped,—and its threshold gave them for a strand ;

The witch was busy now,—and had applied

To a dry pile of wood her wrinkled hand
Armed with a torch : the pile began to blaze
Throwing on all around its ruddiest rays.—

CII.

Saul soon beheld in what a place they were
Deep in the bowels of some lofty hill :—
High o'er their heads, he felt a roof was there,
Yet could discern it not,—but had to fill
The void with dark imagination's air,—
Pregnant with dismal forms : tomblike and still
Were vault and floor,—save at one end a fountain,
Which bubbling rose,—hot from the stufo-mountain !

CIII.

And there before its age-worn basin lay
A serpent wreathed in many a scaly coil,
Whose demon eye had ne'er beheld the day
A native he of the unwholesome soil,—
Monster and earth-born ! oft he would display
To meaner reptiles round in sportive toil,
His length enormous,—and the forky tongue
Which played, with death concealed, its fangs among !

CIV.

Just had the Python once assayed to slake
The torment of his thirst in the dull water,
When a far sound of oars upon the lake
Drew his attention to another quarter ;
And as the fire flashed,—the tremendous snake
Came fawning on his Sorceress,—and caught her
By her torn arms, and feet, in many a fold ;—
While Saul, in silence, trembled to behold !

CV.

‘ Whom shall I raise thee up ? ’ the Weird enquired,
‘ For thou art here, before the gates of hell,—
‘ That world unseen, where spirits have retired
‘ Some to their rest,—some not,—consider well : ’
Then Saul, who felt as if he scarce respired,
Said in a whisper,—‘ Raise me Samuel ;—
‘ For I am come this awful night to claim a
‘ Favour from the lamented Seer of Ramah ! ’

CVI.

And now the altar burned,—and up to heaven
Curled in a spiry fold the guilty smoke ;
The blue flames crackled,—and the ban was given
Which tore the centre of the solid rock ;—
The earth twice quaked,—and as asunder riven
Burst—but then closed again, with such a shock,
That ev'n the Woman wailed,—whilst up in air
Arose erect, like reeds, her horrid hair !

CVII.

The moon in murky clouds hid her bright head
And stars from their fair orbits seemed to fall ;
The birds awaking from their forests fled,—
The hills moved lightly, tottering one and all
To their dark bases ! Thrice, with summons dread,
Howled in the dust the raging Bacchanal,
Till low responses came,—like doleful sighs,
Heaved in his death-pangs, when a murderer dies !

CVIII.

Lo ! then the groaning ground a third time clave,

And through the yawn uprose a cloudy sheet

Unfurling fearfully,—till forth it gave

A figure mantled o'er from head to feet,

Ghastly,—like one committed to the grave

But moving terribly the king to meet : —

And when the Woman saw him prostrate fall,

She shrieked aloud—‘ Deceiver, thou art Saul !’

CIX.

Horror was centered in the mists that hung

Thick round the rising Seer ; the dew of death

Froze on his pallid hand, that backward flung

The grave clothes, bound about in many a wreath

Of linen, white as snow,—the which among

Waved a thin form yet paler ! not a breath

Betrayed mortality ;—’twas soul and mind

Once more in matter forcibly enshrined !—

CX.

Then spake the Spectre—‘ Why hast thou disquieted

‘ Me in those restful realms, where silence reigns ;

‘ And that, when now the hungry worm hath rioted

‘ So long on my corporeal remains ?

‘ Think’st thou I can to heaven’s eternal fiat add,

‘ Or aught diminish of the destined pains

‘ That wait thee in another world below,—

‘ Whither alas ! unpardoned, thou must go ?’

CXI.

The monarch answered—‘ I am sore distressed,

‘ The Philistines, our foes, against us come ;

‘ And neither priest nor prophet hath expressed

‘ The will of the Most High,—for all are dumb ;

‘ God too hath long departed from my breast

‘ While conscience sinks me, with the mighty sum,

‘ Of countless misdeeds : therefore I here sue

‘ At thine own hand to know what we should do ?’

CXII.

The Shade rejoined—‘ And canst thou ask of me,
‘ Seeing Jehovah from thee is departed ;
‘ And hath become an enemy to thee,—
‘ Because his service thou hadst first deserted :
‘ Where was the king of Amalek,—when ye,
‘ Thou and thy host had pity,—rebel-hearted,
‘ Wielding in vain the fierce avenging sword
‘ Of Israel and of Judah’s faithful Lord ?

CXIII.

‘ Therefore thy kingdom hath been rent away
‘ And given to thy neighbour,—even David :
‘ Therefore the Lord hath done this thing to day,
‘ Though upon earth full oft I mercy craved
‘ For thine apostacy,—but all delay
‘ Is wearied now ;—and how can ye be saved ?
‘ Thou and thy sons shall be with me to morrow,
‘ Descending to the grave in hopeless sorrow !

CXIV.

‘Also, the Lord Jehovah will deliver
‘Israel together with thee to the foe;
‘And countless thousands shall pass o’er that river
‘Parting the world above from one below,—
‘Invisible as yet;’—he seemed to give a
Sigh as he spoke,—and shook his mantled brow,
Then vanished swift in air; while Saul was found
Laid out at length,—as dead,—upon the ground!

CXV. * * * CXX.

From rank to rank the captains all were flying,
Encouraging and marshalling the host:
Some urging threats, or promises applying
Staked on that dreadful day,—or won or lost:
Nor was Saul idle,—though his hopes were dying,
And well his heart foreboded what ’twould cost
To meet the terrors of the approaching hour,—
Deprived as he was of celestial power,—

CXXI.

That erst till now had aided him.—He numbered
All that were with him,—gave to each their place,
Then of his helm his fierce brow disencumbered
And shewed a countenance of kingly grace,—
Without a lowering cloud,—although there slumbered
Despair beneath,—which none but God could trace :
Through all the files of fearful war he goes,—
Just as the sun o'er Hermon's hill arose.

CXXII.

Mighty and terrible before the host
He stood,—higher than any by the shoulders,
Royal,—erect,— whilst in his eye the boast
Of former victories cheered his awe-struck soldiers ;
His voice was heard afar from post to post,
The adversaries quailing as beholders,—
For amidst Israel, and her noble leaders,
He looked like Lebanon with all its cedars !

CXXIII.

But hark ! the battle burns ; an arrowy shade

Of thousands upon thousands of dread missiles

The field a red Aceldama then made ;—

Each storm of weapons fell as thick as bristles

On the roused boar, in fatal wrath displayed :

Squadrons trod squadrons down like thorns and
thistles ;

When panic tremor through the hebrews ran

From troop to troop,—and spread from man to man !

CXXIV. * * * CXXVIII.

But Saul himself was gone,—no coward he ;

Where'er the fight had hottest raged, his plume

Was marked full long,—like a tall mountain tree

Torn by fierce winds amid the tempest's gloom,

Now this,—now that way seeming oft to be

Inclined,—and stript of all its leafy bloom,—

Yet rooted firm upon its native rock—

So Saul appeared within the conflict's shock.

CXXIX.

Alas ! the enemies took care to note him,
And many an archer his best skill had tried
Vainly,—till one and then another smote him,
Whose shafts let out the life-blood from his side ;
And then he turned,—while friends and foes devote him
To that destruction for which now he cried :
Defeat of all his followers bereft him,—
The pomp of war,—strength,—sense,—and slaves had
left him ;

CXXX.

Save that some stragglers,—one his armour-bearer,
Lingered a little by their wretched master—
Unlacing his stained breast-plate, for the wearer
Looked wan and pale, as if he scarce could last a
Moment alive ; and there was no repairer
Of such a breach as this : but fast and faster
The Philistines poured on, like loosened waters
Rolling along the vale,—intent on slaughters !

CXXXI.

The prostrate monarch raised his fainting head
And saw his faithful servant,—‘ Art thou there ? ’
He feebly faltered,—‘ Have the hebrews fled ? ’—
‘ Then pity me,—and let thine eye not spare
‘ My royal rank,—for numbered with the dead
‘ Ere long I must be,—and thou too wilt share
‘ My bitter fate—draw—draw once more thy sword,
‘ And sheath it friendly in thy fallen lord ? ’—

CXXXII.

‘ Forbid it me,’ he said :—‘ This sword has never
‘ Dyed its keen edge in any save a foe ;
‘ And sooner than I would thy life-strings sever
‘ Short as they may be,—to those realms I’d go
‘ Where darkness dwelleth, as ’tis said, for ever :
‘ Shall I my king, though dying, murder ? no ;
‘ But let me now assay to wash thy wound—
‘ The blood, I see, is gushing on the ground.’

CXXXIII.

Yet Saul returned for answer ;—‘ Tell me truly

‘ Hast thou seen aught of either of my sons,

‘ Abinadab or Jonathan,—who duly

‘ Entered the battle with me ;—for it runs

‘ In my sad mind, that as I oft unruly

‘ Treated the last with harshness,—he at once

‘ Might here have left me,—and alas ! I view a

‘ Troop bearing on my lifeless Melchi-shua !’

CXXXIV.

The armour-bearer answered his inquiries—

‘ I saw thy Jonathan before a file

‘ Not yet defeated,—and I did admire his

‘ Courage and fire : ’—in Saul a transient smile

Gilded his features, like a lunar iris

Seen but at night,—and for a little while,—

So sweet and soothing were the tidings told,

Although in vain,—for heart and hope were cold !

* * * * *

THE SONG OF DAVID.

I.

Lo ! on yonder mournful mountain

Israel shouted for the day ;

Myriads met beside the fountain—

And at evening—where were they ?

Vanquished Judah fallen lies ;

All her boasted beauty dies !

II.

Tell the tidings not in Gath,

Nor in haughty Ascalon—

Lest Jehovah's righteous wrath

Seem as if an idol won

Victory for Dagon's daughters,

Triumphing o'er Israel's slaughters.

III.

Oh ! ye hills of high Gilboa,
Mourn for Jonathan and Saul !
Weep ye waters of Siloa,
For the mighty's shameful fall :
See the Lord's anointed shield
Cast upon the bloody field !

IV.

From the gore of thousands slain
Turned not back the royal bow :
On the sanguinary plain
Sire and son consumed the foe,—
Ere their sword-blade sought its sheath,
Drunken with the tide of death !

V.

Yet they fainted—yet they fell ;
Like in life,—in death the same :
Fallen pride of Israel,—

Worthy of a deathless name :
Seers shall sing in sacred story
Of their undivided glory !

VI.

Swifter than the eagle soareth,
Flew they foremost in the fight :
Stronger than the lion roareth
Thundered forth their voice of might :
Wail, ye minstrels, and bemoan
For the crown of greatness gone !

VII.

Ever let those fatal vallies
Blighted with the mildew fade :
They beheld the conquerors' malice
Ravin on the royal dead !
Let them wither—let them languish :
Nor survive a monarch's anguish !

VIII.

Oh ! my Jonathan ! that loved me
E'en with more than woman's love,
How thy loss hath pierced me—moved me,
I on earth—and thou above :
For the fallen mighty mourn
They shall never more return !

THE LAND OF THE ROMANS.

ITALIA! O ITALIA!

Say—where is the land where the traveller lingers
The latest and longest in viewing her shore?
Where the wreck of her fame,—and the ravishing fingers
Of Time have allured us to love her the more:
Where the pomp and the pride of her prowess are o'er,
And her heroes but live in the legends of story,—
Reflected afar from their ages of yore,
Like stars seen at twilight, as lovely and hoary,
With their radiance glassed in the glow of an ocean of
glory!
Oh! fairer is Italy found in her fall,—
In her ruins, which echo the young raven's call;

In her palaces prostrate,—her temples o'erthrown,
With their ivy-clad altars now reft and alone ;
In the brightness which wanes over every sad shrine,—
In her chambers all choked with the bramble and vine,
In the willow that waves,—and the nightweed that nods
O'er her marbled alcoves, once the dwellings of Gods !
In the myrtles, which mantle her tottering towers,
Or her theatres clothed with an iris of flowers ;—
In her columns cast down,—and their capitals seen
With the whiteness of snow, amidst shrubs ever-green,—
Where the long grass and lichen are weaving a shroud
Too soon to conceal their magnificence proud ;—
In the silence, which saddens those solitudes now,
 Where the thunder of throngs once arose ;
In the veil which Remembrance hath cast o'er her brow,
And which makes e'en the peasant in guiding his plough
 Sow tears, as in sorrow he goes ;—
In the sun that shines o'er her, all cloudless and fair,

The sweet balm of her breath, and perfume of her air ;
In the bloom of her morning,—the glow of her even,
The shade of her mountains,—the hue of her heaven ;
In the rush of her rivers,—the wave of her woods,
The crystal expanse of her lakes and her floods ;—
In the cool of her groves, where the turtle is telling
The tale of his love,—with the leaves lightly swelling
Around him, in murmurs, as zephyrs sweep by
Like the wailings of woe, and the depths of a sigh ;—
In all these, and far more,—still is Italy fairer
In spite of her fetters,—her yoke,—and her chain,—
Than the nations around, who have made her their wearer
And who smile at her fortunes, nor hear her complain !

We saw the fisher furl his flapping sail
Upon the lake of Lemman ;—for the sun
Full long had left the mountains : and the stars
Looked on their glassy mirror spread below.

'Twas an autumnal evening, and the groves
Had strewn each pathway, as a carpet soft,
With leaves for peasant girls, who homeward bore
Beneath the moon an overwhelming load
Of faggots rustling as they tottered on.—
These roam not, save their native woods among,
For winter provident;—or when the summer
Imbrowns their cheek upon adjacent slopes
With vineyards smiling, where luxuriant shoots
Demand attention from the dresser's care.—
But now the Alps were reached,—their shady sides
Leading to loftier summits, capd with snow,
The eternal walls of Italy and Rome!
Up towards the heaven they rise,—ridge behind ridge,
Peak over peak ascending,—clothed beneath
In spiry robes of fir;—yet bare above
Where winter reigns, and nature, torpid, sleeps.
Slowly we mounted, by the sinuous road,

Miraculously led along the verge
Of many a precipice, low lined with larch,
Within whose yawn, loud cataracts were lost,—
Heard,—yet scarce seen,—save that thick sheets of foam
Sparkled from out each wonderful abyss
And gathered round in horrent icicles!—
Hark! how it thundered,—when a fragment torn
From its own native cliff, by the rude rush
Of waters, fell—and vanished in the void;
Resounding,—as it sunk from rock to rock
In an accumulative,—latent ruin!—
Vast forests crashed, in the depths invisible,
Whence clouds of clamorous birds upon the wing
Sprang, as it were, into a sudden being,—
As on the fifth day's morn, when all their tribes
Rose from the waves, and filled the echoing air!
Now blew the gale, keen over every face,
Freezing the breath congealed,—which hung grotesque

In hoary horrors from the undressed beard
And bushy whiskers on the postboy's cheeks.
His patient cattle panted as they drew
With labouring necks our cumbrous vehicle ;—
Whilst each slow wheel, impeded,—scarcely turned,
But creaking, with agglomerated load,
Denied the boon of slumber,—had it been asked
Amidst a world of wonders : night was clad
Not here in robes of darkness ;—for the snow
Averts such northern terrors,—and throws o'er
All nature's face its sheet of spotless white
Sparkling beneath the stars :—there too we saw
The ray, that oft from some far hovel shone,
Nestled in lofty crags, and near the clouds—
A home unenvied,—though a port it be
Perchance to him that owns it ; where his head
With honest labour worn, in peace lies down
Lulled into slumber with the storms below.

He heeds them not ;—for they have ever been
His rough companions, from his infant days
Up to the present hour :—their hoarsest roar
To him is harmony ;—or when in wrath,
They shake the mountains to their utmost base,
Tis sport to him,—if but his cot be safe !

'Twas morning soon,—and Phœbus lowered obscure
On regions round us, bound in chains of frost,
Indissoluble ;—we had reached the glaciers
Fixed like a frozen ocean,—and as if
Their mighty waters at some potent spell
Had paused—and petrified : the billows hushed !
Then changed the scene :—winds fell ;—and there now
shone

Beneath the eye extended, far and wide,
A boundless waste of cloud and vapour spread
Like an unruffled main, without a shore,

Save the blue sky expanded fair above,—
Whence, from that fleecy surface, peered the peak
Of many an Alp, in strange fantastic form,—
Rock—headland,—promontory—bluff—and cape,
An airy archipelago of isles—
Such as are sown upon the Egean sea !
Whilst ever and anon, swift eagles flew
With plumes of power, oaring the waves of snow,
Nor furrow leaving of their pinion's way !

There is a village on the cheerless brow
Of Cenis,—by the margin of a lake,
That owns one lonely isle,—a naked point
Centered in its calm waters ; whence a stream
Divides the ice, with unarrested voice,
And further down becomes a tumbling cascade
From steep to steep ;—the summer here is brief,
Yet not unknown—like joy in human scenes.

Glad nature welcomes her, whene'er she comes,
With cloudless smile:—the fields are clothed with flowers,
And in the wilds a sudden Eden blooms
As fleeting as the real one:—all is gone
When thrice the moon hath filled her silver horn;
So that life droops again;—the marmot creeps
Back to its cave,—and winter rules once more!

At length fair vallies opened, far beneath,—
Of Piedmonte glorying in her chesnut shades!
With Lombardy beyond them,—that rich prize,
Which Hannibal, perchance from spot like this,
First shewed his shivering soldiers;—and in vain!
But not the march of armies, stained with blood,
Nor the hoarse clarion, summoning to strife
The flower of nations,—nor the ensanguined wars,
Where liberty at stake suspended hung
In equal poise,—have honoured yonder glens,

Like the sweet memory of those who fell—
The Vandois Protestants—for conscience sake !
They were the genuine great ones of the earth
Who wandered faithful,—fearless,—o'er their hills
Hungry and thirsty for the cause of truth,—
The cross their banner—comfort—joy—and crown !
How many a cave is silent now,—which heard
The sigh of those afflicted,—uttered then
In secret,—in their only refuge found
From the fierce world around them : every nook
Hath thus been hallowed with their tears or blood,
A martyr's refuge—or a martyr's grave !

TURIN is reached,—where through her flowery plains
Eridanus,—the king of rivers rolls.—
How in our boyhood have we sported oft
In fancy on its margin ;—Phaëthon's fate
Had made us love it,—and the poplars still

Adorn its banks, like those which Ovid sung.
Hail with thy hundred cities,—mighty stream,
Child of the Alps—and midst untrodden snows
Opening thy fountain,—where the chamois drinks
Alone—nor fears the boldest hunter there.
We watched the close of day,—which lingered long
On Monte Viso, with its spotless cone
Towering o'er all—the Olympus of the chain :
Unfabled,—for the solar beam seems throned
Eternal on its pinnacle,—or yields
To night alone,—when with agreeable change
Her shadowy hand shuts up the busy hours,
And round her breast divine of placid peace
Zones her rich galaxy :—then down the Po
Shoots the lunette :—we heard its whispering keel
Talk to the waters,—while along the shores
Loitered the angler ; and sweet nightingales
Cheered with their lay his idler vigilance.

The very air was more than eloquent
Even in its calm : oh ! Italy, thy skies
Are an Elysium,—and thy favored sons
Need mourn for no Arcadia : all thy seasons,
Meeting in harmony, contribute each
Their choicest offerings : while revolving months
Lead round, in fairy dance, the fruitful year
Serene and vernal :—not the mountain woods
Of wealthy Media with the groves contend,
Which soft Ausonia's happier hills adorn.
Her plains are plumed with olives : the tall elm
Marries his vine,—whose purple clusters glow
Through foliage full and fair : the yellow fields
With harvests laugh and sing ;—unnumbered flocks
Along her countless streamlets roam and feed
In joyousness uninjured : not the climes
Of Indian Ganges ;—nor the golden torrents
Of richer Hermus can with these compare !

We saw the marble wonder of MILAN
A hollow mountain,—shaped by nicest art
Into a pyramid of fretted spires!—
'Tis best to view it, when the full-orbed moon
Silvers its frosted pinnacles;—so cold,
So soft,—and yet so elegantly bright
It then stands out beneath the firmament :
Glacier of Architecture ! oft we traced,
Amidst thine aisles, how soon our Gothic sires
Stole art from nature ; when their wandering hordes
Transferred her solemn charms to chiselled stone.
Woods were their temples first,—whose trees sublime
Embowered the avenues of lofty naves
With roof of awful shade : such boughs entwined
Kept out the sunbeams ; whilst uplifted eyes
Caught inspiration for their future fanes.
Rude was each early effort : now and then
For purposes of worship, some mere tent

On sheaves of shining lances, stretched and hung,
Answered, where woods were wanting ;—which with
wreaths

Fantastic bound, of flowers, formed chapters.
Improvements followed : men to wander ceased,
And shifting tabernacles quickly changed
Into substantial piles. The sculptor's toil
Then made the rafters live with curious shapes
Of seraphs,—blossoms,—fruitage,—or young leaves
In rich corbeilles,—a mighty mimic he !
Shrines now became ambitious : pillars rose
Heavenward,—as aiming to support the skies :—
Firm fan-like arches branched aloft in air
Springing innumerable, from one solid base,
Enchantment not unlike,—so wondrously
Strength ribbed their arms ascending,—or enchained
Their lines across, in single grasp, or coign,—
Whence from carved centres, magic foliage burst,
Luxuriance and symmetry combined !—

Who sits in silence, throned upon her isles,
Wasted with melancholy—weeping o'er
Her fretting fetters,—while the iron worm
Rusts at her vitals?—VENICE was the queen
Of wealthy Adria,—and her proud foot trod
Disdainfully the ocean,—when it poured
Into her treasures, beyond compute,
Spoils from the moslem won,—with frankincense
From Candian Ida,—or the classic shores
Of Negropont.—She was the crowded mart,
A Tyre of nations,—through whose portals flowed
The golden tides of commerce: her rich hand
Gifted with dowers, worth more than diadems,
Monarchs accepted in alliance fair,—
Soothing that crown of cities, with soft words
And lying flatteries: each revolving year
Brought glory in its train,—until she sat
Among the high ones, highest,—like a God

Upon her seas!—Yet how the scene hath changed,
Thou fallen harlot;—thy gay, purple sail
Swollen with prosperous gales, the storm hath torn
Amidst affliction's billows:—this thy day,
Of joy, hath yielded to a night of gloom,
Songless—wherein, no sound of harp is heard
To cheer the dreary hours: thy doom hath come!
Silent and sad the gondolier is seen
From the Rialto,—skimming its canal
Like the swift swallow: whilst upon each side
Moulder the grass-grown palaces, in weeds
Of desolation wrapt. No streamers shine
Staining the surges, with their rainbow rays
Reflected joyously:—for all is lost.—
No gallant ship, with oars, bounds boldly by
Laden with orient harvests,—ivory,—gold,
Scarlet,—or ebony,—or precious gems,—
With coral,—oil,—or balm, as erst of yore:

Soon may her islands become naked sands,
Where fishermen shall spread their nets to dry—
Heedless of shrines, that once have glittered here!
Yet tyranny itself might learn to spare
Those matchless grecian horses,—which St. Mark
Presents before her clustering domes to the sun,—
Fit steeds to bear his own illustrious car
From east to west :—their necks with thunder clothed
And the glory of their nostrils terrible!
Fame sits upon their shoulders,—breathless fear
Rushes before them, mad,—as if the voice
Of trumpet sounded ; or the shouts were heard
Afar of battle,—and the brunt begun !—

Lo ! FLORENCE, bosomed amidst olive hills,
Weeps in the lap of plenty ; mingling some tears
With the still waves of time, as swift they flow
Bearing away her freedom ! Where are now

Years big with tempest,—and those mighty minds
Which seemed the spirits of the storm,—as if
Exorcised by its tumult?—How they trod
This very spot we tread on : while the world
Marvelled,—nor thought them mortal ; yet yon shrine
Of Santa Croce hath enclosed them all
Within their narrow home, the reckless grave.

Go—ponder deeply in her storied walls,—
Where long has mouldered into silent dust
That hand, whose touch could make the marble live
Which now weeps o'er his hallowed sepulchre !
Galileo sleeps too in a neighbouring tomb,
Of whom they shew a relic ;—'tis a fragment,—
A finger of that arm,⁽³⁾ which grasped and swayed
The sceptre then of science ;—and that held
The helm of reason, when she launched her bark
In ether,—steering on from star to star,—

Fearless of shipwreck there, though ravished oft
With the magnificence of countless worlds,
Revolving glorious round the wondering pole,
Not voiceless to his ear ! Hath ever legacy
Of earthly monarch such command attained ?
Or could the fingers even of Philip's son
Draw such applause ?—So far the powers of mind
Excel corporeal sway : and than a king
Full many a wise man rules a larger realm.

And 'tis at Florence, that the Venus reigns !
Daughter of Hellas ! Her all perfect form
Rising, like new-born nature, from the womb
Of chaos and confusion :—offspring fair
Of time and order,—whose unchangeable charms
Age spoils not, as he passes,—but each year
Pays silent tribute to the cyprian queen !
Not that a paphian blandishment allures

Or taints the moral air :—for as a flower,
Its incense-bloom diffusing through the gale,
Is felt by all around,—so virtue here
Awes in development,—and mortals gaze
Chained speechless at her feet :—like her own orb,
New risen o'er the woody hills that bound
The vale, where Arno glides,—she gives increase
Of beauty to the beautiful,—and yields
Brightness unknown before to scenes below.

Oh ! for a lodge within the pathless glades
Of Vallombrosa,—walled with mountains round
From the whole universe ; where solitude
Of old hath reigned,—in silvan horrors clad,
Sheltered amidst tall rocks, and feathered cliffs,
Where the deep roar of waterfall afar
Mingles with murmurs of eternal shade,
Wailed by yon waving forests, in green masses

Heaving with every zephyr, as it sweeps
Their surface like an ocean ! Oaks embower
Turf that no footsteps tread ; save when perchance
Some solitary cowl just rustles through
Towards the gray abbey wending :—hark ! a bell
Summons to prayer,—while on the heart it dies
In silvery echoes !—See at sunset now
Those worshippers retire,—their vespers o'er,
Gliding along the cloisters with slow step,—
Like pilgrims wandering down the vale of death.
Still gleam the altars,—though their ministers
Vanish in shadowy distance : and the star
Of evening, floating on the latter smile
Of day's reluctant wane, looks radiant through
The fretted windows :—how the pavement shines,
As if a company of seraphim
All beaming, walked the consecrated floor !
Here holy rapture oft the spirit meets

With loneliness her sister : here unseen,
They ravish souls upon their silent wings
Upward from earthly joys :—then all is peace ;
And every passion, lulled into a calm,
Slumbers, as when the waves of Cinnereth
Hushed at the Saviour's word ;—and kissed his feet.

There is a bird that sings, but when unseen ;
A flower,—which blossoms but in secret vales ;
A spark,—which glows not till the glaring eye
Of day hath closed :—so grateful the lone hour
Or nook remote : the voice of purling rill,
And sigh of passing gale, are sweetest heard
In spot sequestered ;—there the whisper soft
Of conscience, holding commune with the mind,
Reproves, or cherishes each thought conceived.
Me let the forest screen, with kindest gloom,
Or grotto hide me in its cool recess

From the world's noise and folly ; most at this hour
When fond imagination teems with forms,
As fleeting as the ever tremulous shade
Of branches waving o'er the turf beneath,—
Where shaken leaves seem dancing to and fro
In many a fairy maze.—We passed to Rome !

THE COLISEUM.

I.

THE moon is up : and her refulgence falls

Soft o'er these arches,—like the eye of heaven

Gilding with love the desolated walls

Of some lost world, which sin and death have riven :

Holy is now the hour,—for it hath given

Life to the dead,—existence to the past,

Substance to evanescent shades,—and even

A tongue to these dumb marbles, here o'er cast

And shrouded in their weeds, which wave with every blast.

II.

Mammoth of ages!—whose vast skeleton

Time hath entombed in ruins:—whose decay

Is as the glory of a setting sun

Viewing the death of some departing day,—

Whose memory ne'er shall die, nor pass away

But with the wreck of worlds,—when Rome shall be

Lost like a bubble on the billowy spray

Of an unknown—unfathomable sea—

Shoreless—immense—profound—one wide eternity!

THE PALATINE.

TWAS here the Cæsars revelled,—reigned,—and lived
On the proud plunder of a prostrate world :
The golden den of despotism,—then known
As a bright pile of palaces, unmatched
From Caledonia to the Persian gulf.—
How are the mighty fallen ! Lo—yon arch
Now listens to the whisper of rank weeds
Waving in fitful winds, that whistle through
Each hollow cavity ! Both tell the heart
In voice of warning—‘ Glory dwells not here !’
Behold the vestiges of earthly thrones !
The matted ivy holds aloft in air
Fragments of marble just prepared to fall
And crumble underneath those cypresses !
The bacchanalian rout,—the lawless song

Harp—viol—tabret,—all are silent here !
Where music ravished once, the owl loud hoots
To Cynthia in the clouds,—who throws her beams
Through broken roofs,—and cruel rents of time,
Into the depths of noisome vaults below
Where the bat claps his leathern wings,—disturbed !

The steer hath stalled, where once the Cæsars slept ;
And where Drusilla wove her tapestry fair
The spider weaves a finer web by far !—
Tell me,—ye darksome chambers,—ye have known
Scenes differing wide from these: ye must have heard
Thoughts rarely breathed on earth,—an emperor's wish
That Italy and Rome had but one head,
That he might cut it off—and grimly smile !
How deep the silence ;—fancy on the wing
Calls up, without a spell, the shadowy train
Of those, who near two thousand years ago,
Had form, and speech, and then were masters here !

Behold they rise, as from their graves around,
Ghastly,—sepulchral spectres :—the cold worm
Feeds sweetly on the tenants of the tomb,
And creeps into a crown,—if treasured there !
Behold they rise !—the first a laurelled hero,
With hand invincible,—ready to wield
Ten sceptres, could he hold them :—How the blood
Drops from his twenty stabs,—while not a sigh
Escapes that breast, though wounded by a friend !
Tearless he passes on,—since time he knew
Too well,—to lavish tears on such a toy !
Next glides Octavius by,—with all the minds
That shed their light upon his prosperous reign,—
Horace,—and Virgil, with a thousand more,
Who loved the historic muse,—or swept the lyre.
Two monsters follow,—names to be forgotten,
If that oblivion could but hide their crimes :
Like comets upon guilty man they lowered
Scorching the nations, and from out their hair

Shaking the woes of massacre and plague!—
Next Claudius totters,—trembling with his wife
And her infernal son,—who Rome in flames
Eyed with delight,—and touched his lyre the while!
Then Galba,—Otho,—and Vitellius passed,—
Behold Vespasian comes;—and by his side
That virtuous son,—who wept to lose a day!
Like the sweet rose on Pœstum's desert shore
Twice blooming in the year, with fragrant breath,
Amidst the pestilence that rules around,
So lives thy memory, Titus!—so thy name
Millions of subjects hastened to embalm
Within their memories;—had Domitian died!—
But a fox started from his leafy lair,
Whence, rushing over rubbish, he descends
On heaps of fallen shafts and capitals,
Within whose cranies lizards disappear,—
And the charm broken,—all the vision fades!

THE PANTHEON.

FORGET the world,—forget its nothingness
Amid the busy multitudes, that throng
Ceaseless around that venerable dome
Which twenty ages have not swept away.
Enter,— and tread the consecrated floor,
The same Augustus and Agrippa trod !
How the eye ranges round its hemisphere
Half emblem of that fair, and deep blue sky,
Seen through the opening of the roof above,
Where light pours down, in a perpetual flood,
Like truth upon the soul ! Lo ! how it plays
On what were else in gloomy darkness wrapt,
Pillars, and carved recesses,—the bright thrones,
Of heathen idols, which the Roman Cross
Hath overcome : whilst many an urn rests there,

With ashes, that so long as life was given,
Immortal seemed,—and of ethereal mould.
Tis pleasant here to walk and contemplate
The past,—the present,—or the future scene
Unknown,—invisible,—yet deeply felt!
And are they gone,—heroes, and sages all—
Names marking centuries,—or lighting up
The lapse of generations? Whither gone?
Goth,—Gaul,—and Vandal,—war and violence
Have leagued against this shrine,—and yet it stands
The proud Pantheon: men and other fanes
Have melted in the abyss of restless years,
Like flakes of snow,—a moment watched—and lost!
Thou art the wreath of Rome,—whose genius sits
Upon her seven-fold hills,—and mournful sighs;—
The crown has fallen from her brow: her spear,
Which bowed the universe in olden days,
Now, wrapt in clouds, lies broken by her side:

But here her helm remains ; though Ruin broods
O'er the sad sign with melancholy plumes !

Yet from this spot,—this pillared portico
Look upward towards the high Janiculum.—
There is an ancient oak, upon that hill,
Where Tasso wrote, and sung ;—and where he rests.
Beneath its shade, full oft he loved to view
The glowing Campus Martius ; whence sublime,
His spirit winged her way towards Palestine ;
Returning hither to his final grave.
For he loved liberty,—that balm of ill,—
A boon denied to him, in darker days.
They shew his dungeon at Ferrara still
Where tyranny immured the immortal bard.
Oft through an iron grate, sweet songs of heaven
Drew him to gaze away the weary hours :
Or if, perchance some passing pinion caught

His woeful view,—he longed to be a lark,
Or thrush, or nightingale, or linnet gay ;
Not that he envied ought their joyous notes
(His own could match them,) but for liberty,
For liberty,—for this alone he sighed !
Then moody madness found him : and each hour
Created scenes of visionary joy—
To cheat the mourner of his misery.
Often in magic moments his drear cave
Became a mine of Patmos : light within
Springing from lamps imagination lit,
Till stern reality the illusion quenched !

O ! freedom,—where art thou in Italy,
Save where the rock of San Marino shines ?
But hast thou fled for ever ? Shall no more
Ausonia woo thy silvery breast, adorned
With loveliness, that charms, but dazzles not,

So soft its beaming hues ? Thou arkless dove
No rest awaits thee here : no olive-leaf
Waves in these garden-provinces for thee !
The Austrian bows thee down ; and fain would heat
A furnace seven times hotter than he has,
To annihilate for ever thee,—and thine !

TIVOLI.

THE muses love the country : Horace sung
Of Tibur,—the terrestrial paradise,
Where such as he might spend their eve of life.
Nor wonder ; for the mazy Anio winds
In silvery torrents, down her hoary hills,
Laving remotest vallies,—where the shrubs
Pendant from rifted rocks behold their foliage
Reflected in the waters,—just so long
As these may smooth remain : yet smooth not far
Their course is kept,—but more like human life,
It soon perturbs,—and rolling on in streams
Louder and louder, till in thunder wrapt
The precipice is reached,—and headlong leapt
Like time gulfed in eternity ! Look down,

And tremble at the Phlegethon below :—
Look down,—look down—and see beneath that arch
An agony of whirlpools,—torturing,—turning
Into the deepest hell of waterfalls!—
Chaos hath loosened,—lo ! the ruin dashes
Into its cloven,—wave-worn,—hollow channel
Whilst all the welkin shakes : and clouds of spray
Mount to the overhanging groves above,—
Which catch the foam upon their emerald leaves
And shed it back again, in glittering showers
Of diamonds dropping from ten thousand boughs !
There too an Iris plays amid the surge,
As if the soul of nature hovered near,
Or as if peace were weeping over war !—
Look down,—look down,—it fades, and fades away
Like love from anger born,—or beauty banished
By hatred,—envy,—and infernal strife
From the fallen heart of man : for now the sun

Behind yon peak is sinking,—and the glen
With all its uproar hoarse, and wood-crowned hills,
Mellowed,—and softened into gray appears ;—
While yet some lingering beams just gild the town
Not distant far ; and Vesta's fane hath caught
Radiance so clear,—that it seems built on air !

The Sabine mountains now are close at hand,
Where once the lyric poet tilled his farm
Fixed, like a nest, in immortality,—
So great the power of numbers : there they shew
A pavement of his villa,—and the brook
Digentia bubbles o'er a winding bed,
Seeming to kiss the pebbly shore it laves,—
Until Mandela drinks the failing stream.
And there Blandusia's glassy fount still leaps
Beneath its cypresses,—a grateful spot
To the tired heifer from her yoke released.

Fair are the mountains round,—Lucretilis
Fairest of all,—rising with gentle swell
Irregular,—and feathered to the top
With many a forest: olives clothe the side
Embowering here and there some hollow cave
Scooped in the rock, or rough declivity,—
Impervious to Sol's scorching ray at noon,
When panting herds retire to seek the shade,
And every shepherd, weary, lays him down
Beneath the o'erspreading ilex; where the bees
In fervid clusters, pendant from the boughs,
With gentle murmur slumbers soft invite.

Return by Adrian's villa, on the hill
O'er Tempe's wooded glade,—a solitude
Of ruined heaps,—chambers with brambles choked,
Crushed walls and arches,—shrines and theatres,
Fallen alike,—alike with ivy crowned,—

Alike still beautiful and picturesque
In their destruction! such the fair remains
Of this retreat imperial,—where the birds
Sing sweetly ever in a thousand choirs.
There linger too awhile,—when Cynthia stoops
Pale from her fleecy cloud,—to hear the lay
Of countless nightingales; and her fair beam
Pants on the rustling leaves, with silver light,
While nature lulled in silence sleeps around.

And oft retire to yonder lofty shades
With the twin sister lakes: Albano there
Framed amidst emerald forests, mirror like,
Expands serene beneath Hesperian skies
By day or night, in changeful loveliness:
Heaven's deep blue azure, islanded with clouds,
Her starry concave with the milky way,
The verdant groves, that fringe the shelving shore,

And with their branches drink the unruffled wave,
Shine all reflected.—Nemi, erst of old
Diana's favorite haunt, girdled with glens,
Glow, like her rival, in unwrinkled charms.

There is a prospect too, from Alba's height,
O'er all the plains of Latium ;—storied waste,
A wilderness of interest,—where the mind
Ranges with more delight, and extacy,—
Than in a paradise of other lands,
Save Greece alone : for 'tis the theatre
Of Maro's deathless epic ! Turnus reigned
By yonder waters :—there Laurentum lies
Buried in forests ; and the Tiber rolls
Wide, through the lonely scene, his winding waves
Majestic,—and o'erwhelming to the sea !
Flow on thou mighty river,—ceaseless flow,
Emblem of ages sweeping through the world

To their eternity, with reckless flood,
Yet unexhausted ;—thine shall fail with their's,
And their's with thine,—to be together lost
In the same dread abyss, which yet shall yawn
For time and thee,—creation,—and the spheres !
But noble now thy waters ; worthy more
Of the proud name, that city once assumed,
Who sits upon them, queen like,—than herself !
The years may come,—when thou shalt reign alone
Amidst a pathless desert,—and expand
Thy breast serene, by none beheld,—but heaven !
Meanwhile let mortals mock thee with vain toil,
And drain thy waves, indignant when they rise
To swallow up man's footsteps ;—Thou shalt laugh,
Or shake disdainful from thy swelling urn
New inundations to o'erthrow his works,—
And then receding,—follow on thy way !

A SUNSET

IN THE BAY OF NAPLES.

SOL had descended towards the rippling sea
And the blue skies with milder beauties smiled :
Along the horizon burned a path of rays,
Leading as if to the celestial gates
Of paradise supernal : in the waves,
Glory reflected—like a Cherub—shone
Crowned with an iris ;—the green waste beneath
Beamed one vast living emerald, for his throne,
Whereon he leaned, in radiant robes enshrined,
To gild the grave of day : the purpling hills
Caught his effulgence, and all nature glowed
Pouring her variegated incense forth,
Upon an altar fair with fading fires.

Lord!—how sublime thy works,—thy wonders are
Graven throughout creation,—there beheld
Based upon rocks,—on cloud-capt mountains reared,
Chambered within the illimitable womb
Of waters,—floating amidst ambient air,—
And in this azure overarching vault
Of heaven crystallined!—The cool zephyr's breath
Is thine alone,—as is the whirlwind's roar,
This in sweet mercy,—that in anger heard.
Oh! that the universe would raise her voice
Resounding thy full praise!—Break forth ye hills
Feathered with forests,—or with fleecy flocks
Sprinkled;—let joy abound, where plenty reigns;
Sing ere the darkness of the night involve
Your towering tops in silent,—awful gloom!
Awake ye woods,—where deep Avernus lies
In cloistered peace, by many a year-worn pile,
Amidst whose ruins, thousand grateful throats

Might cheer the solitude,—were they but there !
Oh Ocean !—with old time coeval born,
And in thy vastness less sublime alone
Than an eternity,—though yet compared,
A drop,—or less :—declare the mighty name
Of Him,—who poured thee forth, with all thy waves.

And thou descending Orb,—whose glories shine
Glassed in the western waters,—emblem fair
Of truth reflected in the admiring mind,
That sees in thee thy maker ;—fount of light
Out of dark chaos opening at the word
Of the Eternal,—when the glittering deep
Night fled astonished,—to return no more
Sole regent,—only in revolving change,
Grateful as now,—and with her silent queen
Cynthia, thy sister born ; thou lamp of time,
Guiding his noiseless pinions through the gloom

Of ages,—and illumining their vale,—
O'er which, unheeded, to his goal he flies :
Centre of space !—thou star to other worlds,
By whom they navigate their stormless voyage
Through the wide waste of yon etherial air,
In circling orbits ;—thou ne'er-closing eye
Beholding all the planets, as they roll
Around thee,—fervid Mars,—or Mercury,
Or lovelier Venus,—Jove with fourfold moon,
The globe of Saturn sapphired in his rings,—
Or Herschel, wandering on the frontiers far
Of nature,—or fair Earth, thy favorite isle !
Soul of this system,—source and seat of day
Watched by the winged hours,—who now unfold
The gates of morning upon other climes,
While thou the same art ever ;—burning on
Image of the Invisible,—whose ken
Pierceth and searcheth all things :—this obscure

With Him is light,—then praise Him in thy sphere,
Proclaim his power upon the pathless brine
With every orient beam, and setting ray.—

'Tis gone,—and now Capræa's rocky isle
Blends into dusk, whilst in the occident
Of the horizon's circle linger still
The skirts of past refulgence,—mantling folds
Of saffron cloud, which float on the soft air
That wove them,—and dissolve into the waves,
Rainbow on rainbow,—hue succeeding hue,
Till all have vanished :—Night expands her veil
Vivid with countless gems : the citron groves
Nod to the waters whispering on the beach ;—
The bay unruffled glows,—a molten heaven
Where the stars bathe unquenched ; and many a sail
Glides o'er the sparkling surface,—speeding swift
To some safe port along the indented shore,

Like thoughts returning to their home afar
As mine do now,—on silent wing upborne
O'er snowy Alp, and wooded Apennine,
And Gallic plains, through love of sweet repose.
For these blue surges wash not Albion's shore
Nor sigh around her weather-beaten cliffs,
Queen of a sea more boisterous ;—happy isle
Cast in a ruder clime, where winds and waves
Nurse her for noble deeds,—in honor's field
The first to shine : for skies less genial far
Enervate not her children ;—virtue blooms,
Like the wild heath-flower, sweetest in a soil
Least kindly seeming to its virgin growth.
Friendship is known, with each endearing tie
Of matchless worth : a hearth and home are there
Whose memory oft hath cheered me in an hour
When joys were few ;—and recollection's task
In all, but these was painful :—happy land,

If thou, alas, that happiness would'st know.
Go—reap thy harvests with a thankful heart,—
Enjoy thy noblest birthright,—liberty :
And then remember the all bounteous hand
That gives and takes away : a grateful mind
Is peace on earth,—and paradise renewed,
Bliss tasted here,—ere perfect found in heaven !

VESUVIUS.

HARK ! was a tempest or an earthquake born,
When now the clap of murmuring thunder rolled
Rather beneath the feet, than o'er our heads ?—
Look towards Vesuvius,—where upon its hill
Blackness hath based a column,—thence upreared
In spiral volute of gigantic folds,—
As if it propt the concave firmament
Mantled in horrors ! Rocks, red-hot, ascend
Scattered on high, like momentary stars,
And falling then in showers of wreck around—
Just as a fig-tree casts untimely figs,
When shaken by the whirlwind : now pale flames
Climb to the clouds, or flash at intervals
With rumbling terrors ;—till at last they glow

A pyramid of fire :—the cloven cone
Sends forth its stream infernal,—hissing on
In cataracts of lava towards the shore,—
While vineyards vanish, in the molten vale,
Absorbed with fields and groves in smoke and ruin !
Lo ! where the elements at length have met
In hostling conflict along ocean's verge
Boiling like cauldrons,—or receding, foaming,
In lurid surges : vessels weigh their anchors
To stand affrighted off into the main,—
Yet not so far, but that the conflagration
Glares on their reddened sails ! say shall the globe
Turn a deaf ear to warnings such as these ?
Or shall not He, who walketh on the winds,
Before whose foot-steps coals of fury kindle,—
He the Almighty,—He the Invisible
Pavilioned in thick darkness,—shall not He
Be feared by man,—or if not feared,—be felt ?

As once by those three cities now exhumed
From their drear sepulchres,—where long they slept
In wrath o'erwhelmed,—forgotten, and unknown.

Perchance the day was restful and serene,
When Herculaneum, and Pompeii lay,
With Stabia, lulled in the soft lap of pleasure !
Who trembled first at the rebellowing roar
Of yonder hill illumined, then as now,
To them a beacon, that the destroying angel
Had drawn his sword of wrath ? Destruction fell
Resistless on the prey : showers of hot ashes
Rapt from the eyes of husbands, fathers, wives,
Youths, children, infants, maids, and blooming brides,
The lovely face of day :—then shook the earth
In horrid undulations ;—houses tumbled,
Shrines tottered ; and the very victims chained
Bowed at their altars, not with an axe's stroke !

As Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, sank
Down through the opening ground,—so perished these
In the abyss ;—or buried amidst heaps
Of falling columns, thousands on thousands found
A sudden sepulchre, closing not until
'The eyes of myriads saw as their last object
This vast volcano hurricaned in fire !
It was an emblem of another Sinai
Whelming another Sodom :—yet their tombs
Have reappeared, like skeletons exposed,
From which the envy both of time and man
Hath stolen even the grave clothes : not a sound
Echoes amidst the wheel-worn, narrow, streets,—
Once crowded with the masters of the world !
Their theatres are naked,—scorched,—and lone,
Peopled but with imagination's forms
Called up, like shades, to fill the vacant seats ;
There are no plaudits now ;—the serpent's coil

Usurps the arena, basking in the sun :
And where, a thousand years twice told ago,
The lair of lions caged its noble captives
Ready to die upon the ensanguined sand,—
A watch-dog keeps his kennel there in peace.

CLITUMNUS.

HAPPY the ear, that on a summer's noon
Lists to the gushing of thy limpid wave,
Clitumnus :—from a hill the water leaps
Shadowed with ancient cypresses,—whose gloom
Cools the fair margin, where the traveller sits
Numbering the pebbles, as they shine below
Bright in the polish of their glassy fount :
Whence, bubbling on,—it murmurs amidst fields,
Expanding soon, a calm unruffled stream
Patient of many a keel,—which slow ascends,
Or careless, yielding to the current,—glides
Swifter its downward course ;—nor oar, nor sail
Winging her smooth, and voluntary way.—
Sweetly, reflected on its bosom, grew

The ash, or poplar,—or the weeping willow,
Like some fair lady, leaning o'er her mirror,
Touching the crystal tide, which stole along
Beneath their branches :—Here the snowy herds
Bathed oft,—ere gracing the triumphal pomp
Of Roman victors,—to the capitol
Ascending proudly : still a temple stands
Once sacred to the worship of the spring,—
Now holy in its age :—a cross hath crowned
The ruin ;—and the silent scythe of time
Hath left so much of beautiful,—that all,
Who once have seen the spot, sigh to return
And lay them down in such tranquillity.

Far different roars the hoarse Metaurus o'er
His rocky channel, when the winter-flood
Impetuous rushes down the rude defiles
Of woody Apennine : at other times,—

A streamlet only murmurs to the sea,
Where glade and forest line the winding bank
With wavy shades : and there the enamelled turf
Covers the Punic grave ! Sweet flowers uprear
Their heads untrampled now,—as just before
They bloomed ere Asdrubal, defeated, fell—
And stained them with his blood,—outpoured in vain
To glut Rome's vengeance ! Curst be that cruel hand
Which mocked fraternal misery⁽⁴⁾ in an hour
When conquerors should have gained the prize of all,
A crowning triumph,—conquest o'er themselves !

EVENING

AT A LONELY VILLAGE IN TUSCANY, AFTER A LONG
JOURNEY.

JOB VII. 2.

I.

DEAR is the shadowy close of day to me

When silence seems to woo the world to rest :

Slow to her hive then wheels the weary bee

And the soft turtle seeks her downy nest :

It gives the infant to its mother's breast,—

Lures home the wanderer, if a home he knows ;

Shuts up the busy hours, and o'er the west

A refluent robe of dying glory throws,

Signal for toil to cease,—and yield to sweet repose.

II.

But dearer far the christian's trembling eye
Deems, of his sojourn here, the later hours,
When faith's refulgence, falling from the sky
Her golden sunset o'er his death-bed showers;
What though some fleeting cloud a moment lowers,
Full is the thought of ceaseless rest in heaven,
That fairer land than even Eden's bowers
Where sin is sown not, and whence woe is driven,
And of all sorrows past forgetfulness is given!

SIRMIO.

Who passes, without pausing for an hour,
That ruined villa on its promontory
In Guarda's waters, where Catullus loved
To recreate his fancy ? Here he lingered
Morning and evening oft ; or when the gale
Woke from the arms of midnight, and went forth
Winnowing the air, till sunlight streaked the east,
And every bird upon her freshened plumes
Hailed with its song the rising lamp of day !

CATULLUS.

UT flos in septis secretus nascitur hortis
Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro,
Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber ;
Multi illum pueri, multæ optavere puellæ :
Idem cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui
Nulli illum pueri, nullæ optavere puellæ.

As in some garden blooms a lonely flower
Warmed by the sun, and watered by the shower,—
Refreshed with fragrance from the balmy air,
To herds unknown,—uninjured by the share ;
Which many a youth, and many a maid admires
For each that knows the flower,—the flower desires :
Yet, parted from the parent stem, it dies—
No youth regards,—nor maid demands the prize !

LAGO MAGGIORE.

THEY sin, who love not nature,—for her voice
In every whisper hath a magic spell,
Heard in the soul, like zephyr's breath at even,
Which bids her soar sublime,—or walk with God
In lowly solitude,—unseen,—unknown:—
There grow the spirit's pinions; and they climb
From the fair-painted flower, or insect's wing,
Up thro' creation's scale,—rock,—mountain,—cloud,
Till heaven be reached;—as once the patriarch saw,
When slumbering lonely upon Padan's plain,
That mystic ladder touching the confines
Of either world,—where angels up and down
In vision seemed to tread the irradiant way.

There is analogy moreover seen
Between mankind and nature ; both the work
Of one Almighty Being, perfect made,
Till Adam's fall had marred in each the lines
Of faultless beauty : see them shining still
From fair Arona,—where the liquid mirror
Reflects her myriad charms,—the interchange
Of hill and vale,—of wooded rise and fall,
With crested knolls, that swell romantic o'er
Lawns and green meadows, carpeted with flowers,
And sloping gently to the very verge ;—
Whilst many an ash bathes, with her weeping boughs,
In the clear hyaline.—The scene presents
A paradise of waters in the lap
Of nursing mountains, wrapt in robes of vine,—
Its natural network twining picturesque
Through endless trellises,—where clusters grow
In tempting purple, amongst emerald leaves,

Luring the weary.—Terraces above
Ascend, and yet ascend, with gardens hung
O'er the neat cottage roof, that smokes beneath
Cradled in crags:—the Boromean isles
Shine far below, tranquil in sea of glass,
As breezes brood upon them,—stealing thence
Sweet odours, fragrant as the spicy gales
Swept from some orient grove of cinnamon.
There let the poet commune with himself,—
Or hasten on toward Alpine citadels
The contrasts stern to pictures such as these ;
For Domo d'Ossola is nearly won !

Ascend the Simplon ! Italy farewell !
Ranges of mountains rise before the view
Topt with eternal snows, whose purity
The glorious sunbeams walk upon alone !
Forward,—press forward,—till Mont Blanc at last
Props the horizon,—monarch of the chain !

Throne of the Glacier ! Europe's Ararat !
Titanic son of waters !—from the flood
Thou, first emerging, the clear brow of heaven
Beheld by night,—when breathless Horror still
Watched the diluvian surges, clothed in stars,
And seated with her sister Silence, there,—
Each sorceress brooding o'er a ruined world !
Thou sawest the earth unbare her breast once more
To pour forth sustenance for fallen man,—
Yet weeping, ere her beauty could return,
Maternal tears for a rebellious child :—
Thou sawest the bow upon the cloud unfurled,
Banner of hope divine,—whereon she looked,—
And lost in joy,—wiped half her tears away !
Thy rocks, on hell deep-based, the uproar heard
Of the retiring element,—when it fled
To caverns dark and central, there to coil
Within the abyss, until the end of time !

THE LAKE OF NEMI:

ON THE WATERS OF WHICH, ANTIQUITY TELLS US THAT
TRAJAN BUILT HIS FLOATING PALACE.⁽⁵⁾

I.

WHERE towering upward to the skies
The hoary Apennines arise,—
With clouds around their summits furled
Vast as the pillars of the world,
Full many a lake with placid face
Lies lulled in slumber at their base;
While on each mirror, clear as glass,
The zephyrs of the evening pass,—

Oft ruffling every silent deep
With undulating waves, which sweep
Like dimples,—o'er a child asleep.

II.

But there is one above the rest,—
Bright as a gem on Beauty's breast ;
Fair as the azure heaven above,
And like that heaven, a type of love,
 So calm its waters seem ;
A paradise to painter's eye,—
The very picture of the sky
 Or like a seraph's dream.
Its still and solitary flood
Is ovaled in a mass of wood,—
Where winding paths around the margin
 Lead to the gloom of glen and grove,
Now into wild ravines enlarging—
 Or ending in some high alcove,

Hewn from the cliffs, by nature's hand,
The queen of this enchanted land.

III.

Yet—hark upon the startled ear
 A voice of thunder breaks ;
None but the eagle's wing is near
Who dares to build her nest of fear
 Upon the rock that quakes :
And now the traveller surveys,
Mid rising mists of vapoury haze,
 The hills asunder cloven—
By the loud cataract far bounding
From crag to crag, with roar resounding,
 Through forests interwoven ;
Plunging below,—a tide of snow,—
Whilst o'er its source green larches grow ;
As if some ever-verdant May
 Shook from her lap December's storm,

And down the mountain cast away
 A winter in its whitest form ;—
As there it curls, in eddying whirls,
With wreaths of foam in fleecy furls,
Carried along the vale beneath
On to the lake,—as still as death !

IV.

Once, as the night with starry veil
Was falling over hill and dale,
There lay the lake, a sheet in sheen,
 An opal spread below,—
Surrounded with its silvan scene,
And on the slopes of mossy green
Feathered with vines, tall steeps between
 Their shadows seemed to throw :
Whilst every grove, which crowned the flood
 Was penciled with some autumn hue,
And brown decay began to brood

Upon the fair,—though fading view ;
As breezes swept the pines on high
Low murmuring in their majesty.

V.

The sun was hastening to his rest
And kindling all the glowing west :
The clouds, in many a gracefold fold
Hung o'er his proud pavilion,—
And downward as his glories rolled
Were bathed in beams, like burning gold,

And margined with vermilion :
Far to the east,—yet seeming near,
The peaks round Fucinus appear
Sheathed in their icy glaciers clear ;—
Where as declining daylight closes
The solar radiant ray reposes,—
As if their snows had changed to roses :
And every transient tint of light

The lucid lake displays,—
Just as if thousand rainbows bright
With countless changes charmed the sight,
More lovely than a northern night

In meteoric blaze:—
No eye can catch the heavenly hues
Varying,—while yet the mind reviews

The luminous illusion:—
And when the winds, in passing, play
The scattered colours break away

In ravishing profusion;—
So marvellously brilliant glows
That scenery sinking in repose.

VI.

Yet soon, its loveliness was past,
A loveliness too fair to last :
The saffron died,—the purple fled,
The mountains lost their rosy hue ;

And each had wrapt his lofty head
In sombre veil of grey or blue :
Serenely Hesper veered in view
And smiled upon the silent flood,—
Whilst eve her shadowy mantle threw
O'er the sweet scene of wave and wood :
In heaven alone,—all glorious shone
That star with solitary ray :
As if it rose, to watch the close,
And wait upon the death of day.

VII.

A monk that moment reached the shore
To launch his bark, and ply his oar,
And make for the other side ;
Where his convent lay, just across the bay,
Whence the deer, having drank, had stolen away
In the thicket for slumber to hide :
A cask of rich wine the good man carried,

The gift to his Prior, from where he had tarried,
As now he was on his return ;—
And worn he seemed with the journey's length
Both beyond his years,—and beyond his strength
He thought,—as he felt the Falern ;
Which, removed from his shoulder
Only made him the bolder,
To cast it at once in the stern :
Where down as it fell, it gave such a smell,
And he was so over weary,—
That with some little haste, he just snatched a taste,
Lest the liquor should run altogether to waste,
Or the toil of his voyage be dreary !
Perchance he repeated the stolen draught,
For sometimes he sighed, and oftentimes he laughed,
Through the labour of sipping and rowing ;
When midnight found him, as Morpheus had bound him
Unconscious of where he was going.

VIII.

He awoke, or did he awake?—

But he rubbed at both his eyes,
For not as yet had he crossed the lake

Which filled him with much surprize :
And more than this, there before him shone
A marvellous phenomenon !—
Ave Maria ! he three times uttered ;
Ave Maria ! the echoes muttered.

IX.

The waves of Nemi slept as fair
Beneath the circumambient air,
As if no earthly life were there—

Yet sounds of song grew loud :
From a palace of structure most imperial,
Yet in its character so ethereal,—
That one might have thought the pure material
Composed both of light and cloud !

Its base was immense, and pressed on the sense

Of the monk, like a golden ground,—

Whence columns of perfect form arose

In orders four,—all in deep repose,—

And reflected as now the wonder grows,

In the calm of the glass around !

For the capitals gleamed, whilst the windows streamed

With torches that flashed to and fro ;

And tall porphyry portals, stood open to mortals,

To enter and see the show :—

The monk at once threw back his hood,

And quickening his shallop across the flood

He ran up from the steps below !

His cask too he carried, (nor seemed to feel it,)

For fear, if he left it, a thief might steal it.

X.

He entered,—but no one cared,—

Nor looked upon him, as he stared

In a world of wonders lost :

A thousand slaves their flambeaux raised,

A thousand nymphs in beauty blazed,—

And a bit too long he might have gazed,

But well having counted the cost,—

He onward pressed in a boisterous throng

Which lifted him up, and bore him along,

Into a grand saloon ;—

Where the roof was bedight, with lustres of light

So dazzling,—and overwhelmingly bright,

As if dozens of suns had extinguished the night

With the blaze of their day at noon !

There a banquet was spread for a table of kings,

And Genii waited with gems on their wings.

XI.

But one there seemed,—the lord of all

Who filled,—or served,—or saw that hall,

A man of mighty mien :

He sat upon his gorgeous throne,
Surrounded with a matchless zone
Of chosen heroes, loved and known,

As they in life had been :

Nine conquered nations kissed the earth

As if to worship there,—

And when the rabble rang with mirth,
They praised him for his wealth and worth,
Blessing the moment of the birth

Of Rome's resistless heir :—

'Trajan alone the world can claim,'

They cried,—and shouting Trajan's name,
Roofs,—rocks,—and shores re-echoed back the same !
Then did the monk at once believe,
And in his very soul receive

The legend, that related,

How once a year, the wondrous pile
Of Trajan's palace,—like an isle,—

To rise again was fated ;
And float on Nemi for an hour
By order of supernal power !

XII.

Now,—now the emperor rose,
And the monk to fear began :
He felt of his heart, but its courage froze
Before that imperial man !
The emperor waved his hand,—
‘Fetch,—fetch the goblet,’ he cried ;
And at once the prostrate band
Had obeyed his proud command,
And the goblet was at his side.
Our worthy monk had now taken his place
In a small, unobserved, and vacant space,—
Since much he disliked the press ;
And he sat by his cask, indisposed to ask
Any questions,—lest some one should take him to task

For what, he might easily guess :—
When once more the emperor rose,
With a look both for friends and foes,
‘Bring the wine,—bring the wine,’ he exclaimed,
‘We pour our libations, in the name of these nations
‘To the priests of the Gods, whose great gifts and oblations
‘For glory can never be blamed!’—
So saying,—the wine was poured,
And the vast assembly roared
Applause to the Flamens of Rome,
As each health was drunk;—but the christian monk
In secret applied, to the cask at his side,
And silently sipt, with a confessor’s pride,
To the health of his Prior at home :
While yet as he quaffed, just increasing his draught,
It seemed to his ears, as if somebody laughed
From the arch of the roof of the dome !

XIII.

But once more the emperor rose,—
And the diadem beamed from his brows,
 ‘Shed the wine,—Shed the wine,’ were his words;
‘A libation to Mars, who the temple unbars,
‘Where Janus had chained up his blood-sprinkled cars,
 ‘Which we have drawn forth with our swords!’
They poured,—and they drank,—and they swore
Allegiance to Mars evermore:—
Whilst the holy monk, half down on his knees,
Abhorred their heathen deities;—
And though he too quaffed, a most plentiful draught,
 It was to his saint,
 With a name so quaint,
That had he pronounced it, the hall would have laughed!

XIV.

But once more the emperor rose,
And stood on the tips of his toes,—

‘ Fill the bowl,—fill the bowl,’ was his cry :
‘ To the fair and illustrious Juno be given
‘ Loud praise, as the queen of Olympian heaven,
‘ The mistress of all in the sky !’—
He ceased,—but his voice was obeyed,
Enormous potations were made
By the pagans and christian too ;
Though the latter, remaining quite steady,
Only drank to the praise of our Lady,
With an Ave Maria, upon his lips ready,
As a catholic palmer might do !
Yet the crowds assembled, now moved and trembled
Amidst the uproarious din ;—
And a laughing devil, might be seen in the revel,
With a most malicious grin !

XV.

But once more the emperor rose
The infernal banquet to close,—

‘Fill the cups,—fills the cups, once again

‘To the glorious omnipotent Jove,—

‘The lord both below and above,

‘The ruler of gods and of men!’—

All hands were upraised, all eyes glared and gazed,

As a hell of confusion great Jupiter praised,

And drained ruddy rivers of wine:

When the monk in his zeal, though his head seemed
to reel,

Rushed forth from his nook, the grand truth to reveal,

With the Cross for his awful sign!

He made it on air,—he made it on earth,

And fain would have made it on fire;

The multitudes hushed all their tempest of mirth,

As they heard this poor monk, though of lowliest birth,

Denounce the imperial liar!—

‘Oh! Trajan,’ he screamed, ‘thou hast wretchedly dreamed

‘Thy gods are but idols at best;

‘Tis the One only True, and the One only Fair
‘ Can save thee or thine from the depths of despair
‘ And thou must obey His behest!’—

XVI.

He spoke,—but he felt the shock
For the palace began to rock,—
 With all the hosts that were drinking :
The doors burst down their gilded bars,
The lustres fell to the floor, like stars,—
 And the edifice plainly was sinking !
He heard the wail,—he caught the gale
 Of a thousand thousand sighs ;
And as he turned, even Trajan burned,
Whilst his soul, in each agonized visage, discerned
 The flames pouring forth from their eyes !
Then came a dread crash, as the waves seemed to dash,
 And howl about every quarter ;
Where the walls, giving way, let in the wild spray

In tumultuous torrents of water !
He tottered,—yet ran for his life,—
With his hair, on an end, through the strife,
For a hundred hands were around him :
But shouldering his cask, like a Tuscany flask,
He rushed up the stairs, ere they bound him !

XVII.

Yet this was not all,—for that treacherous hall
In returning to whence it arose,—
Went to pieces so quickly,—that the deluge as thickly
Pursues him, whilst upward he goes :
And behind him are legions of foes,—
Their fingers have caught by his cord ;
They pull and they tear, he can just hear them swear,
As he lets go his girdle, with many a prayer,
To fling them all loose and abroad !
But now at his heels is the flood,—
Swelling up to the spot where he stood

To look back for an instant before ;
They are on him again,—the vile brood
Of paganized sprites get a hold on his hood,—
When lo ! he escapes by the door :
At the top of the staircase it opened a vent,
As just through it he sprang,—all bewildered and spent.

XVIII.

And now he was breathing outside ;—
Three stories had sunk in the tide,
So that slight was his fall to the lake :
In a moment he plunged towards the waves
But rose, like a cork, when it gallantly braves
A whirlpool of foam, where it tosses and laves,—
For now he was really awake :
The cask floated near him, just under the skiff,
And both at the foot of his own convent's cliff !

RACHEL.

WRITTEN AT ROME.

Where rolls Ohio's widening wave
Through wastes of pathless wood,
A lone majestic mansion gave
Its shadow o'er the flood.

Bright were the towers when morning smiled
And woke the sleepy gale;
Grey rose the walls, when evening mild
Let fall her starry veil.

A stranger chose the wild retreat
And there assayed to find,
If aught in solitude were sweet
To soothe an aching mind.

He thought he might in nature trace
The whole of nature's God ;
Yet ne'er had known a Saviour's face
Who bought him with his blood.

For he was one of Judah's tribe
The lord of life who slew ;
Nor wealth could win, nor beauty bribe
The worship of the Jew.

His heart adored an only child
Bright as an opening flower,
Whose mother faded, ere she smiled,—
The parent of an hour !

Yet this sweet pledge of love was left
And grew a matchless maid ;
For oft in her the sire bereft
Beheld her mother's shade.

Her form was moulded, as her mind,
And that like heaven was fair ;
Yet nought of this her heart divined
Nor knew a charm was there.

As silvery clouds at even-tide
Float on the balmy gale,
Nor seem to heed the stars they hide,
Behind their fleecy veil :

So modest sense of humble worth
Fresh beauties o'er her threw ;
For she least conscious seemed on earth
Of all the praise she drew.

Now thrice five years with silent flight
Unmarked had passed away,—
When lo ! a ray of heavenly light
Turned darkness into day.

She heard a Saviour's name,—and felt
That all beside was dross ;
Then washed her soul,—and left her guilt
Suspended on his cross.

‘Twas well ;—for now consumption's woe
Had hushed her warbling lay,
Withered the vigour of her form
And snatched its bloom away.

Whilst oft, a feverish,—hectic,—flush
Its silent sign betrayed,
Like roses, o'er a tomb that blush,
And mock the grave they shade.

One evening, when the dart of death
Seemed pointed at her breast,—
His Rachel,—drawing hard her breath,
Her father thus addressed :

‘ My father,—dost thou love me now ?’

And while the sufferer spake,

A gathering cloud o’ercast his brow—

As if his heart would break :

‘ Say,—dost thou love me ?’—deep he sighed

Then wept and sighed again ;

For grief had, like a torrent’s tide,

Plunged him in speechless pain :

And, yet once more, like Peter’s Lord

Whom Peter thrice denied,

A third time, she pronounced the word,

A third time thus applied :—

‘ Forgive me, father,—dost thou love

‘ Me thine unworthy child ?’—

Amazement choked his voice, and drove

His soul with anguish wild ;

Till words a channel found, and flowed

Oppressed with rising tears,—

‘For thee,’ he cried,—‘my all bestowed

‘Too small a boon appears.

‘Ask what thou wilt ; thy last request

‘I never can deny!’—

The promise seemed to soothe her breast

And won her meek reply :—

‘Dark is the hour of death to those

‘Who feel no Saviour near :

‘His smile alone affords repose

And dries the latest tear :

‘His name is JESUS ! and he died

‘Upon the cross for you :

‘The God—the Man—the Crucified

For gentile and for jew !

‘ And oh ! my father, give that love

‘ Thou hast afforded me,—

‘ To Him, who intercedes above

‘ And gave his blood for thee !

‘ I know but little,—yet that word

‘ JESUS to me is sweet :—

‘ I go to call this Saviour,—Lord,

‘ And worship at his feet.

‘ So shall we meet, when time is o’er

‘ In his eternal home,—

‘ That blissful, and celestial shore

‘ Where parting ne’er shall come !’

Her voice had failed ;—yet still her tongue

Faultered the holy name,—

Until she joined the glorious song

Of Moses and the Lamb !

Her father too, ere long, would reach
The sacred choirs above ;
For grace, which every heart can teach,
Had changed the jew's to love.

No more he sighed, because bereaved
Of her he soon should see ;
But joyed to have at last received
The faith of Calvary !



NOTES.

NOTES.

(1)

Their solemn introduction to the styne
An oath not to be kept,—yet not a lie ! p. 50.

THE first of these lines, as every classical reader will at once perceive, is an allusion to the Præsepe, or receptacle, in which Circe kept her metamorphosed captives: Virg. *Æneid.* lib. vii. 15—20. as compared with Ovid, Apollonius, and Homer. The second refers to neither fable nor allegory, but to a simple matter of history.

Archbishop Laud, as is well known, digested into a regular Corpus the Oxford Statutes, to observe which, every young man used at matriculation to swear, or rather to be sworn, in the following awful formulary: ‘Tu fidem dabis *ad observandum omnia statuta*, privilegia, et consuetudines hujus universitatis Oxon: ita Deus te adjuvet, tactis Sacro-Sanctis Christi evangeliiis!’

Now strange and scarcely credible as it may appear, this Oath thus solemnly taken was not considered obligatory either upon the consciences or practice of those who took it, *in many respects*: for there are sundry absurdities in the Laudian statutes, which no one seemed to dream of obeying. In other words,

a breach of this tremendous adjuration was by no means thought to involve the offender in the guilt of perjury, or even common falsehood. It ought not moreover to be omitted, that an Elenchus, or abstract of these deceptive laws, was always presented to each individual, on his being sworn : and still further, to preclude the possibility of ignorance respecting them, an extract was always read aloud, being the paragraphis in brackets on page 133. Titul. xv. De reverentia juniorum erga seniores. By the last clause of that extract, the party about to take his first step in the moral and religious education of his university, swore 'upon the most holy gospels of Christ,' that he would shew suitable respect to his superiors, 'ad justum intervallum caput aperiendo, atque etiam reverenter salutando et compellando : ' neither of which, were young men then, nor are they now, obliged in practice to do, except to the head and tutor of their college, the proctors, and the vice-chancellor. The mischief done to the conscience was not, nor can ever be, in dispensing with certain tokens of respect towards academical elders ; but in enacting an obligation,—in imposing an Oath, which, so long as it was only once taken in word, might be afterwards practically lost sight of. To dispense, or even tamper with moral obligations, strikes a blow at the very root of virtue, for which no intellectual advantages can afterwards adequately compensate. The Subscription to our Thirty Nine Articles was formerly an accompaniment to matriculation ; but this exaction is said to have been altered within the last few years : the university now resting satisfied with a general declaration of attachment to the Church of England.

One may suppose that the mischiefs of the matriculation oath began to be perceived, even at Oxford ; for to the later editions of the Laudian Corpus an 'Epinomis seu Explanatio juramenti'

has been added, to shew how far the intention of the imposers of the oath, (which of course constitutes the essence of the matter,) is to be understood. This Epinomis, however, can hardly be said to bear upon the extract, which used even of late years to be read aloud, as a specimen of what laws those matriculating were to obey: and yet that very extract, thus sworn to, and therefore laid upon the conscience, was no more than idle words, or waste paper! If the Statutes were to be imperfectly observed, why should the solemn nature of an oath be trifled with, on such an occasion? If the obedience expected were such as required an adjuration, why fritter it away, with an 'Explanatio juramenti,' more germane, it is to be hoped, to the system of Ignatius Loyola, than the noblest protestant university? We have heard, but will not answer for the correctness of the rumour, that the Duke of Wellington, soon after his inauguration as Chancellor, used his great influence for the abolition of this enormous anomaly; and that he succeeded in getting the necessary Grace passed, through the proper channels, by a majority of ONE! The moral, intended to be illustrated in the story of Lesley, may now be understood by every intelligent and candid person.

(2)

And vainly have been cast the lots of Purim

Fool that I was to think of trusting them! p. 144.

In this singular mode of divination, which came originally from Chaldea, and found its way afterwards into several parts

of the world, Zeus or Jupiter, the chief object of classical Pagan worship, one of whose titles was *Pur*, used to be especially invoked. Compare Esther iii. 7 : ix. 26—28—32 : the Dictionary of Father Calmet, under the word Purim ; and the analysis of Ancient Mythology by the learned Jacob Bryant. vol. 1. p. 156 : also Cicero de Divin. lib. 11. cap. 41.

(3)

A finger of that arm ! p. 192.

Michael Angelo, and Galileo, both lie buried in Santa Croce ; but it is the fore finger of the right hand of the latter, which is preserved under a glass case, in the library of St. Lorenzo, with a copy of six latin verses inscribed under it, upon a marble pedestal, by Thomas Perellius.

(4)

~~————~~ *Curst be that cruel hand*
Which mocked fraternal misery, p. 230.

See this barbarity, on the part of a Roman Consul, towards Hannibal, graphically depicted by Livy. lib. xxvii. cap. 51.

(5)

The Lake of Nemi. p. 239.

‘The Roman emperors delighted, as may naturally be supposed, in this delicious spot, and Trajan in particular, who erected in the centre of the lake a palace, (for it can hardly be called a ship,) of very singular form and construction. This edifice was more than 500 feet in length, about 270 in breadth, and 60 in height, or perhaps more correctly in depth. It was built of the most solid wood, fastened with brass and iron nails, and covered with plates of lead, which were double in places exposed to the action of the water. Within, it was lined and paved with marble, or a composition resembling marble; its ceilings were supported by beams of brass; and the whole was adorned and fitted up in a style truly imperial. It was supplied by pipes with abundance of the purest water, from the fountain of Egeria, not only for the use of the table, but even for the ornaments of the courts and apartments. This wonderful vessel was moored in the centre of the lake, which thus encircled it like a wide moat round a gothic, one might almost say an enchanted castle; and to prevent the swelling of the water, an outlet was opened through the mountain, like that of the Alban lake, of less magnificence indeed,—but of greater length. On the borders of the lake, various walks were traced out and alleys opened, not only as beautiful accompaniments to the edifice, but as accommodations for the curious, who might flock to see such a singularly splendid exhibition.

‘When this watery palace sunk we know not, but it is probable that it was neglected, and had disappeared before the invasion of the barbarians, as may be conjectured from the quantity of

brass, that remained in it, according to the account of Marchi, a learned and ingenious Roman, who in the year 1535 descended in a diving machine, and made such observations, as enabled him to give a long and satisfactory description, from whence the particulars, stated above, have been extracted.' Eustace's Classical Tour through Italy: vol. ii. chap. viii. pp. 270—2. See also the Supplementary Appendices and Notes on Trajan, in the edition of Tacitus by Brotier. For the legend, relative to the palace being supposed to float annually for an hour, the author only is responsible.

THE END.



TORQUAY:

PRINTED BY E. COCKREM.



KQ-230-811

